FRONTIS PIECE.

See Vol 2 Page 117

FRONTIS PIECE.

See Vol 2 Page 117

THE

VOLUNTARY EXILE,

IN FIVE VOLUMES,

BY MRS. PARSONS,

AUTHOR OF LUCY, *&c. &c.*

VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE,
AT THE
Minerva Press,
LEADENHALL-STREET.

M.DCC.XCV.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE

VOLUNTARY EXILE.

CHAP. I.

MR. BIDDULPH was deſcended from an ancient and honorable family—his parents died when he was young, and left him and a daughter, two years younger, to the care of their uncle, a gentleman who held a place under government, and who had always lived on the beſt terms with his brother's family. Mr. Biddulph's father left a clear

eſtate of twelve hundred a year, and about fourteen thouſand pounds in the funds, eight thouſand of which he bequeathed to his daughter Catherine; two thouſand to his nephew, the only child of his brother, and the reſidue to his ſon, at the time of his father's death, eleven years of age: ſuch was the diſpoſition of his effects. The daughter was ſent to an eminent ſchool; the ſon, Henry Biddulph, his uncle placed at Weſtminſter, with his own ſon, one year older than his couſin.

Henry, though very young, had ſtrong paſſions, and great ſenſibility; he felt the loſs of his father moſt acutely, and to the painful remembrance of this event, he moſt probably owed the leading features in his character, which were ſerious and contemplative, yet tender, humane and alive to the fineſt feelings of the ſoul.

William Biddulph, his couſin, was of a very different turn of mind; active, volatile, capricious,

pricious, and unſteady; he had a ſharp wit, without judgment; a mind capable of information, but with too much levity to profit by inſtruction; he ſkimmed the ſurface of learning, and with an apparent wonderful deal of knowledge, he was entirely ignorant of the real principles of any thing he was taught, yet contrived, by cunning and boldneſs, to obtain a reputation in the ſchool, he was truly undeſerving of.

Henry, to whoſe mind all artifice and deceit was an entire ſtranger—who being younger than his couſin, and unaccuſtomed to a public education, naturally looked up to him with a deference and a deſire to imitate, which gratified the pride of the other (who, young as he was, poſſeſſed a competent ſhare of ſelf conſequence, and much low cunning to cover his deficiencies) open, generous and unſuſpecting, doubting his own judgment rather than the friendſhip or integrity of his couſin; Henry, every now and then, was drawn into little deviations from rectitude,

that pained him at firſt on reflection; but ſo gradual, ſo imperceptible to young minds are the progreſſive ſteps onward to folly and vice, that in a ſhort time he no longer felt the ſting of repentance, when he neglected his ſtudies, and being the laſt ſcholar, and conſequently the *fag*, he was taught to believe he was obliged to comply with the deſires or commands of the ſuperior boys.

The numberleſs errors, I may ſay *vices*, which great boys at thoſe public ſeminaries are guilty of, are too well known, and very frequently over-balance the advantages they receive from their education.

Henry was but too much employed, and though he often bluſhed at his commiſſions, and felt them repugnant to his ideas of rectitude, and a degradation to his character, yet he had too much ſpirit and ſenſibility to ſtand the teſt of ridicule, nor dared to erect a judgment of his own, in oppoſition to the general ſenſe of ſo many older than himſelf. Such

is the rock on which young minds are often wrecked, often warped from integrity by the force of example, and incapable of ſtanding the laugh againſt their own peculiarities, though conſcious within themſelves, they originate from the rule of right. Yet although Henry complied but too often with the deſires of his companions, and idled his time away very unprofitably in general, he had that quick conception, that ſtrong underſtanding and memory, that very ſoon gave promiſe of great talents, and was an object of envy, equally, to his relation and companions; feeling their inferiority, they ſought to engage him ſtill more in diſſipation, and deviſed a hundred juvenile ſports, ſuited to his age, and placed thoſe temptations before him, ſo difficult for a boy, at his time of life, to withſtand.

William Biddulph was too ſenſible of the marked difference between himſelf and Henry; his diſlike to him aroſe in proportion to the abilities diſplayed by the other, and his

chief delight conſiſted in drawing him into idle purſuits, that might impede the rapid progreſs he made in his learning.

The late Mr. Biddulph, in his will, had fixed a certain ſum for the education and expences of his ſon, until he arrived at the age of ſeventeen, when a different plan was to be adopted; in conſequence of which, his pocket was very liberally ſupplied, and his own wants or indulgencies being very moderate, Henry felt ſuperior pleaſure in being able to accommodate his couſin, who was mean enough to profit by his generoſity, and covered his hatred with that fawning duplicity, which honeſt ingenuous minds, incapable of practiſing themſelves, ſeldom ſuſpect in others, until experience, and a commerce with the world, opens their eyes, and enables them to diſtinguiſh between ſincerity and falſe appearances.

Poor Henry eaſily fell into the ſnares laid for him, and though honour and integrity were fixed

fixed in his heart, yet he was often guilty of deviations from both, by the perſuaſions of his companions, which cauſed him many painful reflections, and frequent determinations to avoid them in future: but alas! 'tis much eaſier to repreſs error, than to recover from it; good reſolutions are often formed, but very difficult to perſiſt in, when arguments, temptations and examples turn to the ſide of pleaſure, and faſcinate youth, who are ſoon induced to call their vices venial faults, pardonable in their juvenile days.

Thus, for three years, Henry's was a mixed and undecided character; a compound of errors and virtues; his heart was good, though his judgment often was overpowered by the fallacious arguments of others, and he frequently was guilty of faults which his own reaſon condemned—but at his age, ſtability and deciſion could ſcarcely be expected.

William Biddulph, however, acquired habits of duplicity and vice, which ſtamped

chief delight conſiſted in drawing him into idle purſuits, that might impede the rapid progreſs he made in his learning.

The late Mr. Biddulph, in his will, had fixed a certain ſum for the education and expences of his ſon, until he arrived at the age of ſeventeen, when a different plan was to be adopted; in conſequence of which, his pocket was very liberally ſupplied, and his own wants or indulgencies being very moderate, Henry felt ſuperior pleaſure in being able to accommodate his couſin, who was mean enough to profit by his generoſity, and covered his hatred with that fawning duplicity, which honeſt ingenuous minds, incapable of practiſing themſelves, ſeldom ſuſpect in others, until experience, and a commerce with the world, opens their eyes, and enables them to diſtinguiſh between ſincerity and falſe appearances.

Poor Henry eaſily fell into the ſnares laid for him, and though honour and integrity were fixed

fixed in his heart, yet he was often guilty of deviations from both, by the perſuaſions of his companions, which cauſed him many painful reflections, and frequent determinations to avoid them in future: but alas! 'tis much eaſier to repreſs error, than to recover from it; good reſolutions are often formed, but very difficult to perſiſt in, when arguments, temptations and examples turn to the ſide of pleaſure, and faſcinate youth, who are ſoon induced to call their vices venial faults, pardonable in their juvenile days.

Thus, for three years, Henry's was a mixed and undecided character; a compound of errors and virtues; his heart was good, though his judgment often was overpowered by the fallacious arguments of others, and he frequently was guilty of faults which his own reaſon condemned—but at his age, ſtability and deciſion could ſcarcely be expected.

William Biddulph, however, acquired habits of duplicity and vice, which ſtamped

his character through life, and was productive of much miſery to his family, whoſe darling he was.

The father, brought up at court from the earlieſt age, acquired that elegance, that politeneſs of manners, which engages attention; and with thoſe who do not penetrate beyond the exterior, generally conciliates eſteem. He was educated by an old aunt, who had been formerly a perſon of conſequence at court, and a bed-chamber woman: ſhe had inſtructed her nephew in the arts of accommodating, in which he had ſucceeded ſo well, as to obtain a genteel appointment before he was twenty, and by gentle gradations, had riſen to a poſt of conſiderable advantage, both as to ſituation and emolument. His lady and two daughters were perſons of conſequence in the faſhionable world; they lived, they dreſſed in the higheſt ſtyle of elegance; their routs and carriages exceeded thoſe of the firſt rank, of courſe their expences were fully adequate to Mr. Biddulph's income,

though

though near five thouſand pounds a year; and one of the daughters having married a baronet, he was prevailed on, to accompliſh the union, to give her a handſome ſum, that greatly embarraſſed him to raiſe, without, at the time, reflecting, that the other daughter had equal pretenſions, and that he had a ſon to provide for.

Mrs. Biddulph having gratified her pride, by making her favourite daughter a lady, was too much delighted to attend to the conſequences of the preſent embarraſſment, or the future diſadvantages which muſt unavoidably occur to her other children; and with that blameable partiality which frequently cauſes diſtreſs, envy, and hatred in families, between the neareſt relatives, her whole affections were abſorbed in one object, very little deſerving of the diſtinction.

As Mr. Biddulph was obliged to make a drawback ſome where, his ſon's expences were very limited, and his youngeſt daughter ex-

perienced, in ſome degree, the ſame inconvenience. William Biddulph, therefore, found his couſin's purſe a very great accommodation, and it was his principal motive for wearing an appearance of affection for Henry, which in reality he was far from feeling.

At the period when our hero became ſeventeen, it was ordered by the will of his father, that he ſhould be ſent abroad, under the care of a reſpectable character, who was to have two hundred pounds a year for his attentions; two hundred more was allowed for Henry's pocket expences, and ſix hundred for their travelling charges.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

MR. BIDDULPH, who had faithfully diſcharged the truſt repoſed in him, had the young gentlemen taken from ſchool, having moſt fortunately obtained a place for his ſon in the cuſtoms, valued at between two and three hundred a year. William, however, felt no gratification in the appointment, he thought it a degradation; and accuſtomed to live on terms of equality with Dukes and Lords, he could not bear the idea of buſineſs, or being a companion to perſons of an inferior rank; extremely diſſatisfied therefore, he remonſtrated to his father on the meanneſs of

the ſituation deſigned for him, and failed not to obſerve, that it was very abſurd for a young man, heir to only twelve hundred a year, to be ſent abroad on his travels, whilſt the ſon of a man, poſſeſſed of five thouſand, muſt be condemned to drudge in a public office.

" Was the income I poſſeſs an hereditary one," replied his father, " you might have ſome cauſe for complaint; but you ſurely forget, that at my death you have no dependance, and I will alſo frankly tell you, that I do not wiſh to ſettle you in a ſimilar ſituation with myſelf, for, generally ſpeaking, there is not a man about the court, unleſs poſſeſſed of a private fortune, that lives within his income; there are ſo many attendant expences, ſo many demands made on him to ſupport the family conſequence, that very ſeldom indeed is there any accumulation of property to leave his children. Your couſin's father was my elder brother, he enjoyed the family eſtate; my paternal fortune I own, with ſhame, was diſſipated in my youthful days, and conſcious

of

of the errors I was then guilty of, and of the imperceptible expences I have of late years been drawn into, 'tis my wiſh to detach you from a ſituation, replete with many inconveniences, and much vexation. You are very young, you will riſe moſt probably in the office; the buſineſs is trifling—'tis poſſible, (though I would by no means have you to expect it) that, if I live, ſomething better may be done for you; but at any rate, the income is ſufficient for the ſupport of a young man, and to make him appear reſpectable."

Silent, but neither pleaſed nor convinced, William parted from his father, and entered his mother's dreſſing-room, there he gave vent to the diſcontent of his mind, and curſt fate, for making him the ſon of a younger brother.

Mrs. Biddulph would have paid but very little attention to the complaints of her ſon, had not her pride felt ſome alarm, on being told

told that he was intended to be a drudge in an office of buſineſs. After a little conſideration, and when he had expended his ill humour, ſhe ſaid,

"My dear William, I am as little pleaſed as yourſelf, at your father's meanneſs, in accepting for you a place of ſuch inſignificance, but a ſcheme has occurred to me, that I think may be productive of an advantage to you, independant of your father—your couſin Catherine, what do you think of her? ſhe is but juſt turned of fifteen indeed, but her fortune, by the accumulation of intereſt, and other ſavings, is near ten thouſand pounds. With half the money you may purchaſe a place at court, if you prefer it, the other moiety will furniſh a houſe handſomely, and anſwer your firſt year's expences; perhaps her brother may be perſuaded to make ſome addition to her fortune."

"I have

"I have no doubt of it," cried William, riſing up briſkly, "I can perſuade him to any thing."

"That muſt be hereafter," replied his mother, "for this plan muſt be a ſecret one. Your father would certainly object to it, on the ſcore of youth on both ſides; therefore, I muſt inſtruct you in what manner to conduct your manœuvres; for the preſent, take all opportunities of gaining the affections of Catherine, without being obſerved, and leave the reſt to me."

Highly pleaſed with this ſcheme, William appeared before his father with a more placid air, and attached himſelf to his couſins, in a manner that pleaſed them, and gratified Mr. Biddulph.

Catherine, Henry's ſiſter, had been ſent for from ſchool, to meet her brother, and ſtay a few weeks with him, previous to his departure for the continent. She was a tall, agreeable

agreeable girl, without any pretenſions to beauty—and with ſtill leſs, to the good qualities of the heart. Her perſon was pleaſing enough, but an air of haughtineſs, a penetrating eye, that ſeemed to ſearch with ill-nature to make its obſervations; a narrow mind, tinctured with envy, and a deſire of acquiring a ſuperiority over all thoſe who might be conſidered as on an equality with herſelf, rendered her in general an unpleaſant companion, and very little eſteemed by her young aſſociates; for an attempt to demand more than we feel inclined to give voluntarily, is moſt commonly repulſed, and an affectation of ſuperiority, by wounding our ſelf-love, generally loſes more than it gains. Catherine therefore was without friends, though ſhe had companions, and the number of young ladies under the care of one governeſs, who delegated her authority to the teachers, and provided the taſks of the ſchool were well performed, gave themſelves no trouble to inveſtigate the minds or manners of their pupils, precluded all chance of eradicating from her heart

heart thoſe weeds, which cultivation might have deſtroyed, but which, from neglect, were ſuffered to grow up into confirmed ill habits. Young as ſhe was, vanity was her predominant paſſion; ſhe was conſequently much gratified by the flatteries of William, who laid them on with an unſparing hand, whenever they were opportunely alone.

Mean time preparations were making for Henry's departure, much to the diſſatisfaction of Mrs. Biddulph, who, in her deſire to promote the family intereſt, had thrown her eye upon him for her younger daughter, Eliza, then about ſixteen. But as Mr. Biddulph reſolved to pay a very ſtrict obſervance to his brother's will, ſhe could make no oppoſition, that would be effectual to prevent it, and therefore contented herſelf for the preſent, with giving her aſſiſtance to forward her ſon's advantage.

Henry, whoſe mind was undecided—who in reality loved virtue, though he had purſued folly,

folly, now that he was removed from his inſinuating companions, and more at liberty to judge for himſelf, gave many proofs of a good heart, though now and then old habits would return. His uncle had prevailed on a very reſpectable man, to accompany him abroad: the ſalary was not large enough to tempt a man of any ſuperior abilities to undertake the charge, and therefore he had ſought to procure one, whoſe character and general knowledge might ſecure him from vicious connexions, and give him that kind of information of common life and manners, which if it did not convey brilliant ideas, or a more refined underſtanding, at leaſt might give him uſeful and juſt notions of ſociety, oftentimes of more real utility to a gentleman, not intended for a learned profeſſion, than the drudgery of learning the dead languages, and waſting that time in a uſeleſs ſtudy, which might be more profitably and agreeably employed.

Mr.

Mr. Mead therefore was ſelected from a number that was recommended, to accompany Henry to the continent; he was a curate to a ſmall pariſh in Lincolnſhire, and performed the whole duty within eight miles round, for the noble ſalary of thirty-five pounds a years, whilſt the rector received three hundred for doing nothing. But ſuch inſtances are too common, to admit of particular obſervation, and Mr. Mead, with no other recommendations, than an excellent character, ſtood but little chance of church preferment, and of courſe gladly accepted the offer of accompanying young Biddulph abroad.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

THE day for Henry's departure at length arrived; he took a reſpectful and an affectionate leave of his uncle and aunt; a tender one of his ſiſter and William, who to the laſt kept up an appearance of friendſhip, though envy and hatred predominated in his heart. The moment the former had quitted England, the latter loſt no time in purſuing his plan to gain the affections of Catherine, in which he was ſo very ſucceſsful, that within a fortnight after, and the day previous to the one fixed on for her return to ſchool, they ſat off unobſerved by all

all but the artful mother, for Scotland. Their flight was not diſcovered by Mr. Biddulph, until the dinner hour, five o'clock, and then he had ſo little ſuſpicion of their expedition to the land of hymen, that he only ſuppoſed they were abſent on a ramble through the town, 'till the evening, when a letter from William was delivered, and his intentions avowed. His aſtoniſhment could only be equalled by his vexation; both were ſo young, ſo unacquainted with the world; ſo liable to impoſitions; and as he thought, ſo little capable of judging for themſelves with any ſtability, that he was equally diſtreſſed and provoked at their imprudence.

Mrs. Biddulph, at firſt, affected equal concern and diſpleaſure, but at length, by a judicious application of the "female round-abouts," ſhe ſoftened her huſband's anger, and under the pleaded apprehenſion of their being thrown into improper connexions, prevailed on him to receive them on their return, if they ſhould ſolicit admiſſion to his houſe.

houſe. Having gained this point, ſhe ſoon communicated her ſucceſs, and the very next day after their return to London, the application was made to the father, and in the uſual ſtyle, pleaded love, fear, and every plauſible excuſe, to extenuate their fault, and an earneſt deſire to be forgiven, without which, it was impoſſible for them to be happy.

Although Mr. Biddulph was ſeriouſly offended, he rightly judged they were not of an age to be thrown on the world, or to act for themſelves; he therefore conceded to their requeſt, and received them, not with cordiality indeed, but as well as they could expect, and they ſilently, and reſpectfully liſtened to a long lecture, and a great deal of good advice for their future conduct.

William Biddulph, and his mother, were however a little diſappointed, when they found that only four thouſand pounds of Catherine's fortune was payable on the day of marriage, and the remainder they had to wait

wait near ſix years for. Four thouſand pounds was a ſum by no means adequate to the purchaſe of a handſome place, a houſe, furniture, and the neceſſary appendages to a faſhionable ſtyle of living; and to their great mortification, they found Mr. Biddulph averſe to giving up even that ſmall ſum, as they called it, for the preſent. He told them, as they might continue for two or three years to reſide with him, the intereſt of it, and the income of the place his ſon held in the cuſtoms, would amply ſupply their more immediate expences, and enable them to appear in a very genteel ſtyle; and that very poſſibly, in the courſe of a few years, by the cuſtomary gradations in office, his ſon might riſe to a better ſituation, which, added to his wife's fortune, would amply provide for every wiſh they could form.

This prudent advice and reſolution of his father's, by no means accorded with the inclinations of William; the place from which he was to derive his greateſt advantages, was highly

highly diſagreeable to him, and indeed to get rid of which, without an inconvenience to himſelf, was his principal inducement to marry. But the fortune unexpectedly being ſo entirely dependant on his father's will, without a litigation, he could not enjoy even the four thouſand pounds appropriated as the marriage portion; and Mr. Biddulph had declared his intention of ſecuring the remainder for Catherine and her children. This was a ſtep both juſtice and prudence demanded, and to which, a generous mind would gladly have acceded; but generoſity or juſtice made no part of William's character; the leading features there, were pride, ſelfiſhneſs, and a love of diſſipation; and therefore, though unable to prevent his father's determination, he was much diſpleaſed at the arrangement, and declared againſt it with ſuch anger and reſentment, as called forth very ſevere admonitions from his father, and gave birth to ſentiments very unfavourable to their future happineſs in the boſom of his wife, whoſe paſſions being pretty

ſimilar

ſimilar to his own, ſhe was equally intereſted in having a reſerve made in her own favour; and not a little offended that her huſband ſhould preſume to make any objections; a union formed between two young and inexperienced people, without affection, ſtability, or good principles, could give but little promiſe of happineſs, and unfortunately neither the precepts nor example of Mrs. Biddulph, was at all calculated to promote it; on the contrary, ſhe encouraged their pride, increaſed their conſequence, and initiated her daughter-in-law into all the faſhionable modes of killing time, and ſpending three times her income, whilſt her ſon now and then condeſcended to enter the cuſtom-houſe for a few hours, to preſerve appearances, and entitle himſelf to the emoluments, which, though he affected to deſpiſe, he yet found mighty convenient to him, from the frequent demands of his wife, and his own habits of expence.

Mr. Biddulph beheld, with mingled ſorrow and vexation, the impropriety of *their* conduct, and the very wrong and abſurd behaviour of his wife: he remonſtrated, he entreated her to alter her plan, and lead them gently to a more rational mode of life; he reminded her of her own difficulties, which continually occurred from the very expenſive ſtile of her dreſs and entertainments: but alas! in vain he repreſented the evil conſequences that muſt enſue to them *all*, if they perſiſted in their diſſipations.

Mrs. Biddulph was a woman of the world, violently attached to it; not much above forty; ſhowy in her perſon, bold and aſſuming in her manners; a deciſive peremptory tone, and a flow of words to command attention, obtained for her in all companies a particular conſideration, even from thoſe who deſpiſed her in their hearts. Her ſole ambition was to aggrandize her family. Her daughter, Lady Fancourt, who from Sir Richard's large fortune, was enabled to make a ſplendid

a ſplendid figure, was her boaſt and delight; and being diſappointed in her ſon's conſequence, ſhe endeavoured to cover the diſgrace of his being in a public office, by carrying her daughter-in-law into every place of entertainment, and repreſenting her fortune as of three times its real amount. A woman of this character was not very likely to be affected by advice, which however prudent and neceſſary, militated againſt her inclinations; ſhe heard Mr. Biddulph with an air of diſdain, and replied, with a bitterneſs of expreſſion, that precluded all hopes of any coincidence with his wiſhes. Unfortunately that mode of education, which had taught him complaiſance, almoſt bordering on ſervility, in his juvenile days, to carry the points his aunt aimed at for his eſtabliſhment, had, from his reſidence about court, where every thing is artificial, grown up into habits, that deprived him of that ſpirit and deciſion that was neceſſary to give him conſequence in his own family: added to which, the haughty inſolence of his wife, took the lead in every

thing, and reduced him into the inſignificance of a well bred good-natured man, who ſuffered himſelf to be governed by the females of the family. Yet with all this imbecility of mind, he was not deficient in underſtanding or principles of honour and integrity; the children of his brother he conſidered as a ſacred truſt he was anxious to diſcharge faithfully; and the indiſcreet marriage of his ſon, and their ſubſequent behaviour, gave him real concern.

Mrs. Biddulph's ſcorn and ill-humour, on an occaſion that juſtified his interference, for the firſt time awakened his dormant ſpirit, and excited his reſentment. Finding it impoſſible to argue the point with her, he repaired to another room, where he found his ſon and daughter in a high diſpute, about ſome extravagant demands ſhe had made on his purſe, and which, in fact, he was unable to ſupply; like children they were ſpightful and abuſive; the entrance of Mr. Biddulph put a ſtop to their quarrel, though their looks

were too much ruffled to be miſunderſtood. Affecting to conſider their apparent diſcontent as the effect of a little pettiſh love quarrel, he rallied them on their childiſhneſs, and ſeeming to think it of no conſequence, ſaid, "he was glad to find them together, as he wiſhed to have a little ſerious converſation with them."

"You could never have choſen a worſe time then," ſaid William, very roughly, "for I am deviliſhly out of humour."

"At your age, and ſituated as you are," anſwered his father mildly, "I ſhould ſuppoſe you have little cauſe for being ſo, however, what I have to ſay, ought not to give you any additional diſquietude, ſince I am impelled, by the tendereſt motives, to ſpeak plainly, though affectionately."

Without waiting for any reply, he proceeded to ſtate the derangement of his affairs; the unlimited expences they had run into, and the impoſſibility of continuing in ſuch habits

of diſſipation, without drawing on themſelves the moſt diſagreeable conſequences; he told them *now* was the time to retreat with honour; the expenſive ſtile they had hitherto lived in, might paſs off as the uſual mode of young married people, but that now they might withdraw from it, by going into the country for two or three months, and on their return, appear to be more domeſticated, and chuſe their future plan on what ſcale could be beſt regulated by prudent economy. Every argument that reaſon and affection could ſuggeſt, he adduced to bring them to a conviction of the neceſſity for an alteration in their way of living; but unhappily he found all his endeavours fruitleſs; that anger and ſpleen between themſelves, which his appearance had ſuſpended, now broke out with redoubled violence on him, and to ſuch lengths did they carry their diſreſpectful reſentment, that both united in a reſolution to quit his houſe, and live as they pleaſed.

From

From this ſcene of ingratitude and inſolence, Mr. Biddulph took refuge in his own apartment, too late regretting the authority he had given up, and the powerful influence which now ſuperceded any endeavours of his to recall that command and conſequence, that as a huſband and a father he had *a right* to exert, but which indolence and inactivity had induced him to reſign, and which, from habitude, he had no longer ſpirits to ſupport.

CHAP. IV.

MEAN time young Biddulph and his wife, perfectly reconciled, by having found another object on whom they could vent their ill humour, gladly availed themſelves of this opportunity to remove from the parental obſervation, and act without controul for the future. Thoughtleſs, and eager to adopt a new plan, they ſallied forth, without delay, and before night had taken a handſome houſe, ready furniſhed, in Sackville-Street, into which they purpoſed entering the following day.

When

When they communicated their deſign in a careleſs manner at table, Mrs. Biddulph was much ſurpriſed, and more offended, that ſhe had not been conſulted on the buſineſs, a compliment, which in their extreme hurry to execute their ſcheme, had never once occurred to them. With *her* they had no deſire to quarrel, therefore condeſcended to apologize for their omiſſion, and entreated her to accompany them to the houſe next day—ſhe graciouſly deigned to accept their excuſes, and applauded the reſolution they had exerted. Mr. Biddulph was ſilent, his looks betrayed the anguiſh of his mind, but he ſaw too plainly, that his concurrence or diſapprobation was of very little conſequence with his family.

The next morning the emigrant party, conſiſting of William Biddulph, his lady, a maid, and a man ſervant, accompanied by Mrs. Biddulph, departed for Sackville-Street, where every thing was prepared for their reception, and proper ſervants hired by the

owner of the houſe. Every change was delightful to the imprudent mother, who was little leſs pleaſed than the young folks, becauſe ſhe had another houſe to viſit at. A card was diſpatched to Lady Fancourt, and a reſolution formed, almoſt inſtantaneouſly, to invite a very large party to a rout and ſupper, that they might enter upon their new plan with a proper eclat. Young Mrs. Biddulph, charmed with the conſequence ſhe ſeemed to acquire, from being miſtreſs of a houſe and a proper eſtabliſhment, was in ſuch perfect good humour, that it kindly extended to her father-in-law, to whom, on her mother's return, ſhe vouchſafed to ſend an invitation in form.

It is not neceſſary to be very minute in following a thoughtleſs young man, and a flighty inexperienced girl (for in fact, though married, ſhe was yet a child, in knowledge of the world) through the ſcenes of gay frivolity, and the conſequent gradations to vice, difficulties and vexations in which they were ſoon involved,

involved, and from which they were at length compelled to think very ſeriouſly on the means of being extricated. Without any principle but ſelf intereſt, William determined to apply for the payment of the four thouſand pounds, to which his wife, by marriage, was entitled, and if refuſed, to ſue his father without further ceremony. Having conveyed his ſentiments in a civil, though peremptory ſtile, Mr. Biddulph ſaw no alternative but compliance, ſenſible that he had no right to with-hold the money, and willing to ſpare both himſelf and his ſon the diſgrace of public demands; the money was therefore paid, new ſcenes of ſhow and extravagance was planned, and inſtead of laying it out to purchaſe a place at court, they both rapidly entered into every mode of expence that faſhion and diſſipation could deviſe.

William neglected his duty at the Cuſtom-Houſe, being much too fine a gentleman to attend the drudgery of buſineſs, and the natural conſequence was, that another perſon,

not quite ſo faſtidious, was appointed to ſupercede him. This arrangement, whilſt in the thoughtleſs career of pleaſure, gave him no concern; but as "riches have wings and fly," ſo four thouſand pounds ſoon rapidly decreaſed, nor till exhauſted within a few hundreds, did he ever think ſeriouſly of the ſituation and difficulties he was plunging into. His young and thoughtleſs wife, encouraged by her diſſipated mother, purſued every folly that faſhion deviſed, and by her imprudent conduct, had incurred many ill-natured ſurmiſes, and raiſed the tongue of ſcandal in loud whiſpers through ſeveral polite circles, to the diſadvantage of her character.

Mr. Biddulph, the father, ſeeing the impropriety of their conduct, and bitterly reflecting on his own ſupineneſs, his inactivity and error in giving up the reins entirely to the management of his wife; perceiving ruin approaching with haſty ſtrides to involve them all in diſgrace; having tried, without ſucceſs, every argument of perſuaſion, which

was

was treated with contempt; and every forcible reaſon, which was anſwered with inſolence and ſcorn by his wife and his ſon; overborne by their impetuoſity, and, as has been ſaid, from long habits of indolence, having loſt all authority, he reſigned himſelf to melancholy and deſpair, inſtead of exerting his power, and fell into a rapid decay.

His youngeſt daughter, Eliza, was the only one of the family that ſaw or felt for his ſituation; ſhe was but juſt ſixteen, extremely pleaſing and intereſting in her perſon, and with a mind more ſteady and cultivated than either her mother or ſiſter; which advantage ſhe chiefly owed to a delicate ſtate of health, and the affection of her father; and as when William married, Mrs. Biddulph had a companion in her daughter-in-law, for all her diſſipations, Eliza was permitted to reſt quietly at home, and improve or employ herſelf as ſhe could. Her diſpoſition was naturally amiable; ſhe ſaw and felt for her father; ſhe devoted herſelf to him entirely, and all the

conſolation or eaſe that affection and duty could deviſe, ſhe ſought to procure for him. Senſible of her affectionate cares, and anxious to provide for this neglected girl, he collected together a few hundred pounds, all he could at that time command, and with it purchaſed an annuity for her life, of ſixty pounds a year; he had ſome years before ſecured, in a ſimilar way, one hundred a year to his wife; and theſe ſmall annuities (comparatively ſmall to them who had been accuſtomed to ſuch habits of expence) was, he had reaſon to think, all they could have to depend upon after his deceaſe. For his ſon he could do nothing; the intereſt of about ſix thouſand pounds, which being the reſidue of Catherine's fortune, ſecured to her and her children, he was entitled to receive, and which being placed out to great advantage, would bring him in about three hundred a year, was all he had to look forward to, when he had expended the ſums already received. Poor Mr. Biddulph reflected with deep concern on the follies of his wife and children; a retro-

a retroſpection of his own line of conduct, convinced him, that by procuring to himſelf a temporary quiet, and indulging, through indolence, the errors of his family, he had eventually injured himſelf and them; that trouble and remorſe clouded his latter days, and that their proſpects in ſurviving him, could afford neither hope nor comfort to *his* breaſt, nor to his children. Melancholy conſequences of inactivity and imbecility of mind, that ſought not by ſpirited exertions to cultivate that active principle naturally born with us, and which, if ſuffered to ſink and decay, aſſuredly ſtagnates every principle of virtue, and ends in laſſitude, vexation, and ruin!

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

MR. BIDDULPH having kept up a conſtant correſpondence with his nephew Henry, and Mr. Mead, who at this period were in Italy, and whoſe conduct afforded him the higheſt delight he was then capable of feeling, from the regret occaſioned by the comparative view between him and his ſon; he thought it beſt to write and requeſt their return, although little more than one year and a half had elapſed of their intended three years tour; but conſcious that his health declined very faſt, and anxious to ſettle his nephew's affairs in the beſt manner poſſible,

poſſible, he was deſirous of a perſonal communication, to avoid any future perplexities.

Henry, who in the company and converſation of Mr. Mead, and the advantages reſulting from an intercourſe with the world, had given up all the frivolities which bad examples had engaged him in, and returned to the full exerciſe of thoſe good principles naturally inherent within him, and to which the excellent admonitions and conduct of his worthy companion added ſtrength and ſtability, found, in the conſcious ſatisfaction of his own heart, that peace and delight to which he had long been a ſtranger, whilſt acting in oppoſition to his own feelings. He therefore aſſiduouſly employed himſelf in his ſtudies, and endeavoured to regain loſt time. He had received the account of William Biddulph's marriage with his ſiſter, ſoon after his arrival in France, and was exceedingly ſurpriſed and angry at their imprudence and duplicity; his diſpleaſure was ſoon conſiderably increaſed

increaſed by an application to him for an order on his uncle for money.

Mr. Mead, to whom he made an unreſerved communication, and who, previous to his engagement with Henry, had been well informed of the characters of the whole family, adviſed him by no means to comply with a requiſition of the kind, as he was well warranted to refuſe from his youth and circumſtances. This judicious advice ſaved Henry from repeated demands, which in all probability he would have experienced, but irritated William and his wife ſo much againſt him, that all correſpondence was dropt between them for ſeveral months before he received the letter from his uncle, expreſſing his wiſh for their return, and aſſigning the melancholy reaſons that compelled him to requeſt it. Henry heſitated not a moment, for however reluctant he felt to give up a tour, from which he derived both pleaſure and inſtruction, he loved and reſpected his uncle, and honoured the motives which induced

duced him to require his preſence in England. No time was loſt, and much ſooner than Mr. Biddulph could expect, the arrival of his nephew was announced.

Henry haſtened to his apartment, and in the midſt of an affectionate embrace, was viſibly ſhocked at the great alteration ſickneſs had made within a few months. Eliza, at his entrance, was reading to her father, and after receiving his compliments, would have left the room.

" Stop, my dear child," cried Mr. Biddulph, " let me introduce you to each other, not merely as relations, but as kindred hearts; your worth, my dear nephew, Mr. Mead has done juſtice to; let me alſo preſent to you the beſt daughter, the moſt engaging companion, and the tendereſt nurſe, that ever a parent was bleſt with: eſteem her for my ſake; when you know her better, you will reſpect her for her own claims."

Eliza,

Eliza, confuſed, delighted, and much affected by her father's kindneſs, kiſſed his hand with ſtreaming eyes, and bowing to her couſin, haſtily withdrew.

Mr. Biddulph then ſent down for Mr. Mead, whom he received very cordially, and after a little preparation, without reſerve, acquainted them with the ſtate of his affairs; the ſituation of his ſon and daughter; his anxiety to chooſe proper truſtees for his nephew; and bitterly lamented the errors of his own conduct, from which originated the faults of others in his family.

Mr. Mead being called upon to ſpeak his ſentiments, adviſed Mr. Biddulph, by all means to place Henry as a ward in chancery, which would effectually prevent any depredations upon his fortune, by the artifices of others, or any errors of his own, ſhould he hereafter, on his entrance into life, unhappily be drawn into wrong connexions.

"I have

" I have the beſt opinion poſſible," ſaid he, " of the morals and rectitude of my young pupil's principles, but youth is fallible, and a good heart moſt open to impoſition; therefore, without the ſmalleſt reflection on Mr. Henry's character, I think it right, as far as human prudence will admit of, to guard againſt poſſible, though not very probable circumſtances, that might injure him."

Mr. Biddulph approved of Mr. Mead's ſentiments; Henry knew they originated from affection to him, and readily coincided.

They had ſcarcely ſettled this point, before Mrs. Biddulph appeared; ſhe welcomed her nephew with an air of cold civility, that repreſſed his attentions, and having ſlightly inquired after her huſband's health, turning to Henry with an ironical air, " hoped he had been much amuſed, and had profited conſiderably from *his travels*."

" Certainly,

"Certainly, greatly amuſed Madam," he replied, "and I hope I have not been inattentive to the advantages I muſt derive from Mr. Mead's friendſhip."

A ſcornful ſmile, and a tranſient glance on Mr. Mead, whoſe ſcrutinizing looks ſhe felt very unpleaſant, was her only return, and riſing with a ſlight inclination of her head, ſhe left the room.

Her behaviour paſt unnoticed, except by a ſigh from Mr. Biddulph. Henry requeſted to have his ſiſter's addreſs, and leaving the two gentlemen to ſettle their buſineſs, he haſtened to young Biddulph's houſe. He loudly knocked at the door twice, before it was opened; the ſervant heſitated, and appeared confuſed when he aſked for his miſtreſs; the other haſtily ſaid,

"If ſhe is at home, ſhe will ſee me; ſay 'tis her brother."

The

The man opened the door, and uſhered him into a parlour; he obſerved two men ſtanding in the hall, which he thought of no conſequence, and again told the ſervants his name.

In a moment the door was burſt open, his ſiſter ruſhed into the room, and fell upon her knees.—" O Henry! ſave us, ſave us," was all the words her emotions would permit her to utter, before ſhe ſunk lifeleſs on the floor, as he advanced to raiſe her.

Extremely ſhocked, he rung the bell for aſſiſtance, and endeavoured to ſupport her in his arms, when her woman came in, followed by William Biddulph and a ſtranger. Henry's attention to recover his ſiſter, ſcarce permitted him to return William's ſalute; but by the help of ſome drops, ſhe began to ſhew ſigns of returning life.

" Tell me," cried Henry, " what is the cauſe of this diſtreſs, and from what evils can I ſave

I ſave her, for her addreſs and illneſs greatly alarms me."

William Biddulph turning to the ſtranger, " be ſo good to leave the room a few minutes;" the man heſitated, but taking a ſurvey of the room, which was a back parlour, without ſpeaking withdrew.

Catherine by this time recovered; graſping Henry's hand, ſhe exclaimed,

" Our guardian angel ſent you to preſerve us."

" Preſerve you from what?" cried he, much agitated.

" From impending ruin," anſwered William; " I am arreſted for ſix hundred pounds, at preſent I cannot command twenty; the raſcal will not wait for his money; I ſhall be dragged to a jail; your ſiſter will be turned out of doors, and we ſhall be diſgraced

graced and ruined for ever, merely becauſe this curſed creditor of mine will not wait two or three months."

Tis impoſſible to deſcribe the aſtoniſhment of Henry; ſpeechleſs, he gazed on them alternately—his ſiſter again caught his hand, and with a ſupplicating look, cried,

"Will you not ſave me from ſhame and miſery? are you not my brother, my father, my protector?"

"What is it that *I can* do?" aſked he, in a voice of tenderneſs, melted by the name of father; how can I poſſibly aſſiſt you?"

"Very eaſily, my deareſt Henry," replied William, eagerly, "if you have an inclination."

"Do not doubt it," he anſwered, moved by his ſiſter's tears; "be aſſured of my

ready concurrence, if you can point out the means."

This was all that was wanted; William preſently explained to him the means by which he might raiſe the money, and relieve their diſtreſs. He ſtarted at the propoſal, heſitated, and mentioned his uncle's name.

"Do not mention my father," repeated William; "he will not, he cannot do any thing for me; you muſt preſently determine, I muſt either go to a priſon, or the money muſt be paid."

O brother, brother!" cried Catherine, "will you ſee me diſgraced and thrown on the world, for a few hundreds, which if you would advance, may ſoon be repaid to you."

"Is this your friendſhip!" ſaid William, "but I will aſk no more—poor Catherine! I pity *you*; for myſelf I ſubmit to the fate that awaits me."

He

He advanced towards the door; his wife ſcreamed; Henry could no longer ſtand this ſcene.

"Stop," cried he, haſtily, "I will do every thing you require of me; I feel that I cannot withſtand a ſiſter's ſorrows, though I act againſt judgment and conviction."

At theſe words, which were inſtantly caught hold of, whilſt Catherine threw her arms round his neck, William opened the door, and requeſted the man who had left the room, to enter; he then explained Henry's intentions, and conſulted on the proper ſteps to be taken.

No time was loſt, a meſſenger was diſpatched for a convenient Iſraelite, and in leſs than three hours, poor Henry had given ſecurities for ſeven hundred and fifty pounds, to pay the ſix hundred; the writ was withdrawn; he received the thanks of his ſiſter and her huſband, and an aſſurance that he

ſhould be repaid the money within a very few months.

The whole tranſaction had been ſo rapid—Henry's ideas had been ſo confuſed and hurried, that he had no leiſure to conſider on what he had done, until after William had made his acknowledgments, he added,

"I muſt beg one thing of you, my dear brother, do not mention a word of the tranſactions of this morning to my father, or to your Mr. Mead."

"And why not?" cried Henry, or how can I poſſibly conceal it, without an injury to their confidence in me?"

"Nothing more eaſy," returned he; "they cannot ſuſpect any thing of the kind; can aſk no queſtions, and therefore, are not entitled to expect you ſhould tell them every little occurrence."

Henry,

Henry, who had hitherto, with the moſt unreſerved frankneſs, communicated every ſentiment of his heart to Mr. Mead, felt a very great repugnance to conceal any thing from him; but he was not proof againſt the tears and entreaties of his ſiſter, and was at length prevailed upon to give his honor, that he would not to any perſon betray the ſecret, until the money was repaid.

When he had taken leave, and was returning to his uncle, the buſineſs he had been engaged in, crowded upon his thoughts, and gave him real concern; he had not heard the exact ſituation of William; he did not know that he had loſt his place, nor ſpent his wife's fortune; he therefore ſuppoſed it was as he repreſented, a mere temporary inconvenience, that would ſoon be done away; yet ſtill he regretted the neceſſity which had drawn him into an obligation he could not approve of.

When he appeared before his friends, who had been ſurpriſed at his long abſence, the

diſquietude of his mind was legible in his countenance, and he was eagerly interrogated if he had met with any thing diſagreeable? he replied in the negative, and added, "that his brother and ſiſter had received him with great kindneſs."

Mr. Biddulph appeared to be ſatisfied with his anſwer, yet was nevertheleſs convinced, he had heard or ſeen ſomething unpleaſant, which had thrown a gloom over his air, and which he ſtrove to repreſs, but could not altogether diſguiſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

WITHIN a very few days after Henry's return, Mr. Biddulph and Mr. Mead ſettled his affairs to their entire ſatisfaction; and by the advice of the latter, Eliza Biddulph was to be placed under the guardianſhip of a reſpectable clergyman and his wife, diſtantly related to the family. Thoſe points ſettled, Mr. Biddulph's mind enjoyed ſome degree of compoſure, though he ſtill felt much anxiety for his wife and ſon, who ſeemed to view his approaching diſſolution, not only without ſorrow, but

with an apathy towards the conſequences reverting upon themſelves, that aſtoniſhed every one.

Mr. Biddulph, contrary to the expectation of his family, lived nearly a month after the return of Henry, who during that period, had ſuch conſtant opportunities of admiring the tender attentions of Eliza to her father; her general conduct to her mother and friends, and the ſweetneſs of her diſpoſition, that young as he was, he conceived an affection for her, as warm as it was durable, founded on merits, which time and judgment added ſtrength to, and confirmed him in his firſt election.

The hour at length arrived, which releaſed Mr. Biddulph from a painful exiſtence; previous to which, he had convened his family together, and in the moſt pathetic terms, conjured them to purſue a more rational courſe of life; painted to them the neceſſity for a total alteration in their preſent eſtabliſhment, and recommended a reſidence in the

the country as the only means to preſerve them from impending ruin.

His advice was heard without emotion or conviction, and he expired without the ſatisfaction of an aſſurance that it ſhould be attended to. Henry and Eliza were the only real mourners, with the others, ſorrow was merely lip-deep, and William felt eaſe in being freed from a troubleſome monitor.

When Mr. Biddulph's will was opened, and his affairs came to be inveſtigated, they found, that excluſive of the annuities ſecured to his wife and daughter, the effects left would ſcarcely pay the demands of his creditors, and that the leaſe of the houſe he reſided in, with its furniture, was all he could leave to his wife.

Notwithſtanding the conſtant declarations he had made to them, of the embarraſſments he was involved in, they had flattered themſelves that it was a deception, calculated to

prevent their application for money; when therefore the dreadful certainty came, William raved like a madman; Mrs. Biddulph wrung her hands in an agony, deploring the loſs of her conſequence in the world, and vowing ſhe would ſooner ſtarve, than go into the odious country; ſhe abuſed poor Eliza for the little independence her father had ſecured to her, and now, when ſelf only was conſidered, execrated herſelf for the folly ſhe had been guilty of, in perſuading her huſband to give ſo large a portion to her favourite daughter, Indeed, her unjuſt and vain partiality was rewarded as it deſerved.

Sir Richard Fancourt, ſoon after his marriage with Miſs Biddulph, diſcovered improprieties in the conduct of his mother-in-law, which he thought very unpleaſant for his wife to join in; and when, ſoon after, ſcenes of expence and gaiety was planned, and large demands made on his purſe, which he thought unjuſtifiable, he quickly removed his family from town, without any invitation to Mrs. Biddulph,

Biddulph, a circumſtance that greatly diſpleaſed her; however, ſhe gratified her vanity, by continually talking of her daughter, Lady Fancourt; and when parliamentary buſineſs obliged Sir Richard to return, ſhe was again a conſtant viſitor, though coldly received by him.

The marriage of William Biddulph; his conſequent extravagant conduct, and the diſſipations they preſently fell into, in ſome of which Lady Fancourt was engaged, and appeared but too ready to join, alarmed Sir Richard for his future happineſs, and as the only method of breaking the chain of a connection, that he ſaw threatened to deſtroy his domeſtic peace, he took a reſolution to quit England, and reſide abroad for two or three years; this deſign was executed about three months before Mr. Biddulph's death, and the mother and daughter-in-law were not a little diſconcerted in ſeeing their conſequence decreaſe, when Lady Fancourt no longer graced their parties.

The world, ignorant of the ſtate in which Mr. Biddulph's real circumſtances were, and judging ſuperficially from his income, and the appearances of the family, that he was really a man of fortune, were much ſurpriſed, when at his death it was diſcovered, the loſs of his income was the loſs of all he poſſeſſed; every mouth was then open; every tongue employed to cenſure the imprudent conduct of Mrs. Biddulph, and ſhe quickly experienced that neglect and contempt, which ſhe had deſervedly incurred.

Unable to continue her reſidence in the houſe her huſband left, ſhe ſold the leaſe and furniture, and realized about ſixteen hundred pounds, there being only eight years to run of the leaſe; and the furniture, which poſſibly coſt above two thouſand pounds, did not ſell for one-fourth of its value.

With this ſum in her pocket, and a hundred pounds a year, a prudent woman might have lived very reſpectably, had ſhe retired from

from town, and her former gaieties: but Mrs. Biddulph's mind was immerſed in folly and expence; ſhe quickly repaired to the houſe of her ſon, who as readily received her, conceiving her ready money to be a valuable acquiſition. A houſe which his father had in Wimpole-Street, was the only advantage he derived from his death; on this there was a mortgage, and when it came to be ſold, William's ſhare did not amount to one thouſand pounds, which, after other ſmall demands were paid, left in his hands little more than ſix hundred.

He began now to conſider how they were to ſupport themſelves, and after various conſultations; many unprofitable hours ſpent in ſoliciting the miniſtry, and his father's patrons, to no kind of purpoſe, Mrs. Biddulph was prevailed upon to advance eight hundred pounds; double that ſum was raiſed upon Catherine's fortune, ſhe giving up her jointure, as far as ſhe had power, and with theſe

theſe ſums he bought a place at court, that brought him in nearly three hundred a year.

After this arrangement, they endeavoured to aſſume their former conſequence; but as the ſtate of their affairs was pretty well known, and the reſpect Mr. Biddulph's character and ſituation in life, exacted from his friends, did not extend towards his wife and ſon, they ſoon found the reſpectable part of their acquaintance declined their viſits, and that they muſt form new connexions. Their pride took the alarm, and moſt abſurdly determined them to make a greater eclat than ever, with a view to mortify thoſe that had neglected them; and in the full career of diſſipation and extravagance, we ſhall now leave them, and return to Henry.

Eliza Biddulph, in purſuance of her father's will, was conducted by Mr. Mead and her couſin, to the houſe of Mr. Barrow, who reſided about ten miles from town, and who conſented to board her on very reaſonable terms;

terms; neither her mother or brother concerned themſelves what became of her: ſhe was too inſignificant to occupy their attention; but with Henry ſhe had more conſequence; his kindneſs made a deep impreſſion on her heart, and parting from him was a ſtroke, little leſs painful than the one ſhe had ſo lately and ſeverely felt: nor did Henry feel more eaſy; but convinced that they were both too young to form a laſting connexion, having before his eyes the ill conſequences of an imprudent early marriage, he concealed his particular partiality within his own breaſt; and having ſolicited a correſpondence with her, and aſſured her that in every exigence ſhe might depend upon him and Mr. Mead as on a brother and a friend, he reluctantly tore himſelf from her. He took an affectionate leave of his ſiſter, Mr. and Mrs. Biddulph; he conjured Catherine to relinquiſh the mode of life ſhe had adopted; painted to her the evil conſequences that muſt unavoidably enſue, and aſſured her of his love and aſſiſtance, if her future conduct deſerved it.

She

She ſtifled the paſſion that almoſt choaked her, at what ſhe deemed impertinent advice, and coolly told him, ſhe ſhould ſtudy to deſerve his good opinion. He ſaw and felt her indifference, but could go no farther than he had done, and therefore, with a thouſand ſincere wiſhes for their future happineſs, he quitted the houſe, and on the following morning, accompanied by Mr. Mead, he left London, to reſume his tour abroad, where he intended to remain till he was of age, being at this period not quite nineteen.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

HENRY and his worthy friend travelled through France, Spain and Italy; not flying through the countries, but reſting ſome time at every place where any thing occurred worth obſervation or knowledge; making themſelves well acquainted with ſociety and manners in every kingdom, and enjoying a tour both of pleaſure and improvement. Nevertheleſs, though he ſaw and admired a hundred beautiful women in different countries, his little couſin Eliza ſat cloſe to his heart;

heart; her image mild, good and amiable, was ſuperior in his eyes to all the boaſted advantages of beauty and ſuperficial accompliſhments; and every letter he received from her, gave real tranſport to his heart.

Mr. Mead was not a ſtranger to his ſentiments, though he made no open declarations of them; but in a real paſſion a thouſand little traits are diſcernable to an intereſted obſerver, that eſcape the knowledge of the perſon concerned. He ſaw, and approved of Henry's preference in favor of his couſin—the inclination was founded on the beſt grounds, and an union with a good young woman, he deemed the beſt proof of, and the greateſt ſecurity for, the ſtability of his principles and happineſs.

Eliza, who very ſeldom ſaw or heard from her mother or brother, could give Henry but little information reſpecting their conduct; ſhe was therefore extremely ſurpriſed one day, nearly a twelve-month after ſhe had reſided

ſided at Stanmore, at obſerving a carriage ſtop at the parſonage, and her mother haſtily deſcending from it: ſhe flew down ſtairs to receive her, but ſtarted back on beholding a face clouded with ſorrow; a hurried manner that beſpoke terror, and a diſorder in her dreſs very unuſual with her. Mrs. Biddulph obſerved her emotion, and gueſſed what paſt in her mind; taking her hand, and ſaluting her with a tenderneſs ſhe had been but little accuſtomed to experience, ſaid,

"Lead me to your apartment, Eliza," ſaid ſhe, "I muſt ſpeak with you alone."

Trembling with apprehenſion, the other obeyed; they were no ſooner entered and ſeated, than ſhe burſt into tears.

"Your brother is ruined, *I am* undone, and fly to you to preſerve me from a priſon."

Never

Never was aſtoniſhment equal to what poor Eliza felt; in one ſhort twelvemonth—was it *poſſible* to have expended all their joint property? unable to ſpeak, ſhe graſped her mother's hand, and looked unutterable things.

"I ſee your ſurpriſe," reſumed Mrs. Biddulph, "and I will be explicit. The paltry income, and trifling ſums that accrued to me by the death of your father, were too inſufficient to ſupport me like a gentlewoman; I could not bury myſelf in the country; I could not give up thoſe pleaſures, thoſe elegancies I had been ſo long accuſtomed to; I aſſiſted William; I endeavoured, by applications to our former friends, to obtain a penſion for myſelf, or a better place for him; while this was pending, 'twas neceſſary to make a ſplendid appearance; to give entertainments, routs, ſuppers, and ſuch like parties, to give us conſequence, and amuſe thoſe we hoped to have found friends. Alas! how much were we deceived—thoſe ſelfiſh, time-ſerving people, who crowded to our

our entertainments, and expreſſed the ſtrongeſt attachment to our intereſt, when by our importunity they began to perceive how neceſſary they were to our future proſpects, and doubtleſs obtained ſome information of our difficulties, gradually decreaſed in their kind offers of ſervice, grew remiſs in their viſits, and when we had reduced ourſelves to the greateſt extremity, and preſſed them for the performance of their promiſes, coolly ſaid, they were extremely unhappy to find they could be of no real ſervice to us, and that it was certainly a very wrong ſtep in Mr. Biddulph to loſe his place in the cuſtoms through pride and negligence, when others of ſuperior expectations, would gladly have held it. Such was the end of our hopes; ſuch the advantages we received, for the immenſe ſums we had laviſhed on thoſe worthleſs people! the conſequences were obvious—I was ruined—your brother was yeſterday arreſted for three thouſand pounds, and unable to procure bail, muſt go to a priſon; in hourly dread of the ſame fate, I have fled to you, and now,

Eliza,

Eliza, tell me what you can do for your unhappy mother?"

"Every thing, Madam!" cried ſhe, eagerly, "every thing you can hope or expect from me; I pay but twenty pounds yearly for my board; I dare ſay you can be accommodated for the ſame; the twenty pounds remaining out of my income, will ſerve you for neceſſaries, and I will work, or find ſome employ or other, that ſhall, I hope, add to that trifle for your uſe. Make yourſelf eaſy then, my dear mother!" ſaid ſhe, tenderly preſſing her hand, "whilſt I have a ſhilling, or hands to work, you ſhall want no comforts."

Mrs. Biddulph, inſenſible as ſhe was by nature and indulgence, could not help being a little moved, and calling her a "dear good girl," added, "as to comforts, your whole income cannot beſtow that; comforts!—how I hate the word. Pray, Eliza, do you not correſpond with Henry Biddulph?"

"I do,

" I do, Madam," anſwered ſhe, throwing down her eyes in ſome confuſion.

" There then," exclaimed Mrs. Biddulph, " you may help me; he has it amply in his power to aſſiſt us, 'tis alſo his duty, for the care your father took of his education and fortune: write to him, my dear girl; tell him our ſituation, and implore his immediate aſſiſtance."

" O, Madam," cried the aſtoniſhed girl, " What is it you require of me; indeed I cannot do it; any thing but that I——"

" Any thing but the only thing that can ſerve me, you are ready to do," exclaimed her mother, haughtily: very well, Miſs, I ſee how it is, you have deſigns upon him yourſelf, and think it will injure your own intereſt—I know how to eſtimate your profeſſions of love and duty perfectly."

" I have

"I have no deſigns upon Mr. Biddulph, Madam," replied Eliza, with ſome ſpirit, "and ſhould deteſt myſelf if ſelf-intereſt governed me a moment; how ſmall ſoever my income, I will be independent; I will work for you night and day; I will ſtarve to ſerve my parent, but never will I take advantage of a generous good heart, to draw him into difficulties, or feel a ſenſe of obligation I never can repay."

"Impertinent girl!" retorted her mother, "tis *he* muſt feel the ſenſe of obligation to his uncle's family, and ſince you will not write, I ſhall, and remind him, that tis his duty to preſerve us from diſgrace."

"How can that be poſſible," ſaid Eliza, "if my brother is already in a priſon? alas! if the ſacrifice of my little annuity can aid him, or ſerve you, Madam, I will inſtantly ſeek for a ſituation to maintain myſelf, indeed I will," repeated ſhe, ſeeing her mother look with an air of incredulity. "I dare ſay I can get

get accepted as a teacher in a ſchool, and Mr. Barrow cannot, ſhall not deny me the power of conveying my little property to you."

"Simple girl," interrupted her mother, "How can I live on that poor pittance, or wait, under my preſent exigencies, the tardy coming round of the quarters? no, I will remain here a few days; but take no notice to Barrow, or his wife, of my ſituation, during this time I ſhall reflect on what I can do, and alſo write to him, whoſe duty it is to relieve me."

To this Eliza made no reply; the idea of an application to Henry, ſhocked her extremely; but ſhe knew her mother's temper too well, to venture juſt then at any violent oppoſition to her deſigns, and truſted, that by gentle perſuaſions, when ſhe was more cool, and leſs agitated, ſhe might be prevailed upon to relinquiſh a plan ſhe could not approve. With the moſt dutiful attention, ſhe

ſought to accommodate her mother, and endeavoured, by ſeveral little delicacies, and by enumerating the pleaſures ſhe enjoyed from a ſocial neighbourhood, to reconcile her to a reſidence in the country. Alas! fruitleſs were thoſe endeavours; a woman vain, extravagant, who exiſted but in a crowd, and who had no reſources within herſelf to make retirement agreeable, was but ill calculated for the ſobriety of a country life, and the converſation of reſpectable people, who ſought improvement from entertainment.

The firſt night ſhe was heavy, lifeleſs, and indiſpoſed; at the end of the ſecond day, ſhe was captious and ill-humoured; and on the third, rude, impertinent, haughty and contemptuous.

Mr. and Mrs. Barrow were extremely hurt and diſſatisfied with her behaviour; but the warm affection they felt for their ward, induced them to bear with her rudeneſs, and treat her with a degree of civility ſhe was little

little intitled to. She had written to London, but as yet had heard nothing from her ſon and his wife, which gave her a little uneaſineſs, and rendered Eliza very unhappy.

CHAP. VIII.

THE ſixth day of her being at Stanmore, as ſhe was ſeated in a little back parlour, indolently picking her teeth, Eliza at work by her ſide, the ſervant opened the door, and ſaid,

"Two gentlemen want to ſee Mrs. Biddulph."

In the ſame moment two men entered, one of whom advancing quick, touched Mrs. Biddulph, ſaying,

" I have a writ againſt you for four hundred pounds."

She ſtarted up, crying out, " Now I am ruined!"

Eliza's work dropped from her hands.

" Oh, ſir!" exclaimed ſhe, inexpreſſibly terrified, " What do you mean?"

" Mean!" replied the man, " why the meaning's plain enough Miſs, I have arreſted this gentlewoman here, and ſhe muſt go with us to London."

" O, for heaven's ſake," cried ſhe, " ſpare my mother, do not take her from me.

" As

"As to ſparing her," replied the man, "I don't intend to do her any hurt, d'ye ſee, but ſhe muſt go, and I muſt do my duty, Miſs, and ſo, Madam, if ſo be you are ready, come along, we have a poſt-chaiſe juſt hard by for you."

"What will become of me!" cried ſhe.

"Why no harm," anſwered the man, "you'll be ſafe in my houſe to night, and have a good bed too, if ſo be you can pay for it."

"For mercy's ſake hear me," cried Eliza, "do not take my mother; tell me what can I, what muſt I do?"

"I am ſure I cannot tell; without you or ſhe pays the money, or gets bail," ſaid the man, "ſhe will go to priſon, I ſuppoſe."

"To priſon!" exclaimed ſhe, flying out of the room, and running up ſtairs almoſt

breathleſs to Mr. Barrow. "O ſir, dear ſir, ſave my mother, ſhe is arreſted, will be dragged to a priſon; O ſave her, ſave her," repeated ſhe, ſinking into a chair, "or I ſhall die."

The old gentleman much ſurpriſed, having ſome drops of lavendar in his ſtudy, haſtily poured ſome into a glaſs of water, and obliged her to drink it; ſeeing her a little revived, he took her hand, and accompanied her to the parlour without ſpeaking: here he found the men urging Mrs. Biddulph, in a very impertinent manner, to make haſte. Surpriſe and terror ſeemed to have overcame her, ſhe ſat motionleſs; but when Mr. Barrow entered, with a faint ſcream ſhe run to him, and burſt into tears.

A great deal ſhocked, he turned to the men, and inquired into the particulars; but when he heard the amount of the debt, and knew the impoſſibility, from the ſtate of her affairs, that ſhe could ſettle it, and his own inability

inability to be of any ſervice to her, he turned with a look of infinite concern to the trembling Eliza;

"My dear child, I am grieved to ſay, I can do nothing in this buſineſs."

"Well, then," ſaid one of the fellows, roughly, "We muſt be off, ſo pray Madam, come along."

The mother and daughter were in agonies; Mr. Barrow could adminiſter no comfort; Eliza vowed ſhe would accompany her unhappy parent to town, and after ſeveral fruitleſs endeavours to diſſuade her, Mr. Barrow was obliged to acquieſce, and alſo to be of the party.

Tis unneceſſary to deſcribe this melancholy little journey; Mrs. Biddulph felt moſt acutely all the horrors of her ſituation, from which ſhe ſaw no proſpect of relief, but what muſt ariſe from an application to Henry; and

ſhould even that prove ſucceſsful, a tedious interval of time muſt firſt elapſe.

On their arrival in town, and after being conveyed by the men to a lock-up houſe, Mr. Barrow exerted all his eloquence and tenderneſs to ſpeak comfort and inſpire hope, and when he ſaw them a little compoſed, he left the unhappy mother and daughter together, whilſt he went to the creditors, and alſo to William Biddulph; he found the former perſons inexorable; Mrs. Biddulph's extravagance and inſolent conduct, had left her without a ſingle friend; no terms could be accepted, no favour allowed to her. He then viſited William in the Fleet; but how exceedingly ſhocked was that good man, on entering his room, to find him engaged at cards with three other wretched looking men, with every mark of riot and drunkenneſs about them. He ſtopped at the door with diſguſt and contempt; William ſtarted up in ſome confuſion, and ſpeaking low to his companions, they aroſe and left the room.

I am

"I am deeply concerned," ſaid Mr. Barrow, "to ſee you here, and much more ſo, to ſee you thus employed, with ſuch company, and with ſuch an appearance of intemperance about you. I came from your wretched mother, now in confinement; from your unhappy ſiſter, diſtracted for her and your ſituation; I expected to have found you much affected by the retroſpection of vices and follies that have at length compleated your ruin. Fye upon you! young man; does your imprudence, your errors, accompany you even to a priſon?"

William, who during this time had recovered from his confuſion, and who well knew that it was impoſſible Mr. Barrow could be of any ſervice to him, reſumed his natural haughty inſolence of demeanour.

"I know not, ſir," ſaid he, "what right you claim to trouble me with impertinent obſervations on my conduct; as my ſiſter's guardian, your duty is confined to her, and I

am anſwerable to myſelf alone, for whatever errors I may have been guilty of."

"As a relation and a Chriſtian, it is my duty to ſpeak," anſwered the good man, "but I fear to little purpoſe; nevertheleſs, I am not intimidated by your haughtineſs; I wiſh to know the particulars of your ſituation, to know if in any ſhape I can ſerve you; limitted as my powers are, if I can be uſeful to you or your family, I feel it a duty ſo to do, however injuriouſly treated. Where is your unfortunate wife?"

"Gone to the devil," anſwered he, ſullenly.

"Unhappy young creature! I pity *her*," exclaimed Mr. Barrow; "tell me, is ſhe with you?"

"*With me!*" retorted the other, "why don't I ſay ſhe is gone to the devil? in other words then, ſhe is too wiſe, too much already a woman

a woman of the world, to follow a huſband to a priſon; ſhe has choſen herſelf another protector, of riches and conſequence; and the very day I entered theſe walls, left me, to reſide with Lord N——, a connexion I had long ſuſpected, and ought at leaſt to have profitted by; but ſhe has proved a ſelfiſh devil, by taking all the advantages to herſelf, and offering me only the poor pittance of two guineas a week, to keep me from ſtarving."

William might have gone on for an hour, ſo great was the aſtoniſhment and horror of his hearer, that he never offered to interrupt him; but when he pauſed, the good man lifting his hands and eyes to heaven, exclaimed,

"Is it poſſible there can be ſuch depravity in the heart of man; can any but a fiend wiſh to profit by the eternal ruin of a wife? degrade himſelf to a level with the baſeſt of mankind, by accepting a compromiſe for

diſhonor, and live rioting on the wages of iniquity! unhappy wretch! ſunk even beneath pity; callous to a ſituation, that wrings my heart with ſorrow.—Alas! the poor unhappy creature who has forſaken thee, may be pitied, for linked to a man ſo utterly devoid of principle, no wonder her's were corrupted. I muſt leave you, my indignation riſes beyond the bounds of prudence. Your wretched mother will, I fear, ſoon follow you here; let her diſtreſs move you to ſorrow, ſhame and repentance, and when that hour arrives, apply to me. Mean time, accept not the wages of ſin; find other employment than ſuch as I diſcovered you in, and procure bread for yourſelf."

With an air of ſcorn, he could not repreſs, mixed with an eye of equal grief and anger, Mr. Barrow quitted the room, and an object truly deſpicable. What he had ſaid relative to his wife, was indeed truth; the poor giddy imprudent Catherine, flattered by the attentions of Lord N——, had long ceaſed to re-

ſpect herſelf, and had encouraged the malicious ſlanderous tales of thoſe peſts of ſociety, who eagerly ſeek, in all companies, ſubjects to gratify their envy, and enable them to talk, at the expence of others. Yet though her conduct was highly reprehenſible, it had not arrived to the degree of criminality ſome of her *good friends* gave her credit for, until ruin overtook her huſband, and ſhe had no longer a houſe of her own to reſide in. Without any fixed principles of virtue, ſhe was unable to ſupport adverſity, or to give up the frivolities ſhe had been accuſtomed to, therefore, when in the moment of diſtreſs, Lord N—— ſtepped in, to offer her pleaſure, affluence, and adulation. She heſitated not a moment to accept his offers, but thought ſhe had great merit and generoſity to procure from him a promiſe of allowing two guineas a week to her huſband, who baſely accepted the poor price of his diſhonor, and rejoiced to get rid of her.

Mr.

Mr. Barrow leaving the priſon, called on a few acquaintances of the late Mr. Biddulph and his own, to try if he could procure bail for Mrs. Biddulph; but all his ſolicitations and endeavours were fruitleſs, and he returned with a heavy heart to the anxious and unhappy Eliza; ſhe ſaw by his countenance he had no comfort to beſtow, nor could he conceal his diſpleaſure on being queſtioned reſpecting William, or refrain from execrating a man of ſuch baſe contemptible principles. Mrs. Biddulph was convinced there was no hope for her; her annuity was mortgaged to its full extent; the few valuables and clothes ſhe had remaining, were not worth two hundred pounds, and friends ſhe had none to help her. After reflecting ſilently on her ſituation, as Eliza ſat by her drowned in tears, ſhe at length addreſſed Mr. Barrow.

"I ſee I muſt ſubmit to the mortifying circumſtances that oppreſs me; this night I muſt ſpend here, to-morrow I will be removed to the fleet; I will trouble you, ſir, to diſpoſe

diſpoſe of ſome trinkets for me, that may produce fifty or ſixty pounds, as I cannot reſide in a priſon without money, and I hope that ſum may ſupport me until I receive other aſſiſtance. When I am ſhut up, you, Eliza, *you* may return and be *happy*; your father took care enough of you; my hopes muſt depend on Henry and Sir Richard Fancourt, and certainly ſhame will compel them to liberate me."

The aſtoniſhing compoſure with which ſhe ſpoke, and the reproachful air with which ſhe regarded her diſtreſſed daughter, added to the manner in which ſhe expreſſed her dependance on her relations, thoroughly diſguſted Mr. Barrow, who ſaw the ſame ſpirit he ſo much reprobated in William, was predominate in her, and proved them both very unworthy of conſideration: he was about to anſwer, when Eliza prevented him, by throwing her arms round her mother, and exclaiming,

"Return

"Return and be happy! O, Madam! how cruel the expreſſion; can I know happineſs when you are miſerable? indeed you know but little of me to think ſo; I am ready to accompany you, to ſhare your fate, and the little income appropriated for me, is no longer mine, if you want it; believe me, dear mother, I will ſacrifice every thing, even my life, if it could contribute to your eaſe."

The unfeeling woman looked at her unmoved.

"Your company," ſaid ſhe, "can be of no uſe to me; your income is not in your power, your guardian there has the management of it, and the care of your perſon alſo: you offer me nothing, for you have nothing to give; profeſſions of love and duty are but cold comforts; I thank you, however, but you muſt obey thoſe that *now* have authority over you—your fooliſh father thought fit to deprive *me* of all power."

Mr.

Mr. Barrow could no longer be ſilent. "'Tis painful, Madam," ſaid he, "to reproach the fallen, but I cannot hear Mr. Biddulph's memory reflected on, and this good girl inſulted, without plainly telling you, that had *your* conduct deſerved confidence, you would have met with it; but your behaviour, both before, and ſubſequent to your huſband's death, has juſtified his prudence and fatherly affection. Miſs Biddulph *ſhall* return with *me*; at the ſame time I will ſo far gratify her generous affectionate heart, as to allow that ſhe ſhall give up a moiety of her little annuity to you whilſt you are in confinement, twenty pounds of which ſhe ſhall preſent to you before we leave town: but this, Madam, I conſent to, entirely to accord with *her* wiſhes, to gratify her feelings, not as a juſtice or a favour to which you are entitled: but however deficient you have been in your duties, ſhe is right in perſevering in her's, and far be it from me to weaken them."

Mrs.

Mrs. Biddulph, whoſe violent ſpirit had only lain dormant, but was by no means ſubdued, broke out now into the moſt bitter invectives, and frightened Eliza almoſt into fits; ſhe implored her mother on her knees to be patient, and not diſtreſs herſelf, or injure her health by paſſion; ſhe turned to Mr. Barrow, and beſought him to conſider her parent's ſituation, which muſt naturally irritate her mind, and which wanted the balm of conſolation, rather than reproach, to afflict a wounded ſpirit.

"I feel, my good child," anſwered he, "that you are right, and am ſorry I have been betrayed into a temporary reſentment; forgive me, Mrs. Biddulph, I ought not, at this time, perhaps, to have been ſo warm; ſpare yourſelf and me, Madam;" added he, ſeeing her eyes darting anger; "let us conſider on what is now beſt to be done, without paſſion or painful and uſeleſs recriminations." Without giving her time to ſpeak, he offered to tranſact all her buſineſs the following day;

to

to procure her, if poſſible, a decent apartment in the Fleet, and accompany her there; mean time he adviſed her to retire to reſt, and endeavour to reconcile her mind for a time to a ſituation, that he hoped might hereafter be productive of advantage to her, from a conviction of former errors, and a reſolution to adopt a different mode of life."

"Yes," ſaid Eliza, "preſent puniſhments are ſevere, but neceſſary leſſons, and I truſt our afflictions now will lead to future happineſs. I ſhall remain, ſir, with my mother this night; indeed I will," added ſhe, ſeeing he pauſed; there can be no impropriety in being any where with her."

"I will not oppoſe it," anſwered he, "therefore pray retire to reſt; in the morning I will take every neceſſary ſtep for Mrs. Biddulph's accommodation."

He took leave, much charmed with Eliza's behaviour, and equally diſguſted with the mother;

mother; yet to procure eaſe to the one, he knew he muſt ſerve the other.

The following day every thing was arranged; Mr. Barrow and Eliza accompanied Mrs. Biddulph to the Fleet; ſhe was extremely ſhocked at firſt, and her poor daughter was in agonies; William met them at the apartment ſecured for his mother; equally ſhameleſs and unfeeling was his appearance and behaviour; he told his mother not to make herſelf unhappy, ſhe would find every elegance in life could be purchaſed in a priſon," and added, caſting a ſatyrical diſdainful glance at Mr. Barrow, "you will alſo meet *reſpectable* and pleaſant company."

"O brother!" cried Eliza, "*pleaſant* company!"

"Doubtleſs," anſwered he, "if we have money, pleaſure follows of courſe here, and every where."

To

To this unfeeling ſpeech no reply could be made; Eliza's heart was full, and the unhappy girl, who was to leave a mother and brother in ſuch a place, felt infinitely more diſtreſs than either of them. The ſeparation, on her part, was dreadful; gladly would ſhe have remained to ſhare her mother's ſorrows, and if poſſible, to alleviate them; but Mr. Barrow, though a ſtranger to the great world, and unknowing in the arts of worthleſs women, had heard and ſeen enough of Mrs. Biddulph, to be convinced ſhe was the moſt improper perſon in the world for a young and ingenuous mind to be with; he therefore exerted the authority of a guardian, and obliged Eliza to return with him, though very much affected at her grief and moving expreſſions.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

THE following morning, after a ſleepleſs night, poor Eliza accompanied her worthy friend to Stanmore; he ſought, by every argument reaſon and tenderneſs could ſuggeſt, to infuſe the balm of conſolation into her breaſt, to inſpire hope, and a reliance on Providence to remove the cauſe of that affliction that now pervaded her mind: ſhe was not ungrateful to his kindneſs, but endeavoured to appear more compoſed, though ſhe could not ſubdue her feelings, and encouraged a riſing hope, that Sir Richard Fancourt would be induced to extricate her mother

mother from her difficulties; if not from motives of affection, yet from a principle of ſhame, that her diſgraceful ſituation might not reflect upon his wife and himſelf. As to Henry, he was the laſt perſon ſhe could wiſh to be informed of the late tranſactions; pride, or a ſentiment ſhe hardly knew how to define, inſpired a ſtrong repugnance againſt any application being made to him; and when, in the courſe of a few days after her return, ſhe anſwered a letter of his, ſhe choſe to be intirely ſilent on the ſubject.

Three weeks had now elapſed without any particular occurrence, or alteration of circumſtance; Eliza heard now and then from her mother, who appeared perfectly reconciled to her ſituation, and in her laſt letter hinted her expectations of an agreeable change likely ſoon to take place in her affairs.

One morning as Mrs. Barrow and ſhe were quietly ſeated at their needles, a poſt chaiſe drove up to the door, and they ſaw alight

Mrs.

Mrs. Biddulph, very handſomely dreſſed. Surpriſe and joy rendered Eliza immoveable, and ſhe had ſcarce power to riſe from her chair when her mother entered the room; a flood of tears relieved her; they were tears of joy, and ſhe flew into her arms with the higheſt delight. After mutual congratulations had taken place, ſhe informed them ſhe had been liberated three days preceding that, her ſon alſo, and that they were going to quit England within a week or ten days. Greatly aſtoniſhed, Eliza inquired to what good friend, or by what happy means they were indebted for their liberty.

"To a particular friend of your brother's," anſwered ſhe, with an air of reſerve, with whom you are entirely unacquainted, and who has procured a place for him in the Weſt-Indies, whither I ſhall accompany him."

"And what becomes of my ſiſter Biddulph?" aſked Eliza, in a faltering voice.

"Why

"Why ſhe remains at home, I ſuppoſe," replied ſhe, careleſly; "but I have not time child to anſwer interrogatories, I only came to take leave of you, as the time of our departure is uncertain, and I would not leave the kingdom without ſeeing you; your brother, I believe, is too buſy to ſpare ſo much time, but he deſired his love and good wiſhes to you."

Before her daughter could repreſs the ſtruggles of her heart, to articulate her words, ſome refreſhments Mrs. Barrow had ordered, came in; Mrs. Biddulph took a cup of chocolate, and immediately after riſing up,

"Well, my dear Eliza, good bye; I wiſh you health and happineſs, behave well to your good friends, and when I am ſettled abroad, you ſhall hear from me."

Mrs. Barrow obſerving the poor girl was drowned in tears, and unable to ſpeak, ſaid,

"May I aſk, Madam, of what nature is Mr. Biddulph's employment, and to what part of the world you are going?"

"I have already ſaid to the Weſt-Indies," anſwered ſhe, "and the employment is a place of truſt and emolument;" then turning to Eliza, ſhe kiſſed her cheek, while the poor girl hung ſpeechleſs upon her arm, and giving her hand to Mrs. Barrow, with her love and beſt wiſhes to her huſband, ſhe broke from them both, haſtened into the poſt-chaiſe, and drove from the door without the leaſt concern or emotion viſible in her face.

Eliza had thrown herſelf into a chair, under a variety of contending paſſions, that ſtruggled in vain for utterance, and it was ſome hours before Mrs. Barrow could reſtore her to any degree of compoſure, or reconcile her to the idea of parting, perhaps for ever, with a parent, though that parent had never

never ſhewn much affection or attention to her.

When Mr. Barrow and his ward had quitted town, the worthleſs mother and diſſipated ſon, conſulted together how to deviſe means for their releaſe, or at leaſt the manner of procuring money to live handſomely upon in their confinement. The Jew, who had formerly done buſineſs for William Biddulph, was ſent for and conſulted; he bid them hope for ſucceſs to their wiſhes; mean time they were anxiouſly expecting letters from Sir Richard Fancourt and Henry Biddulph; the former was at Bruſſels, the latter at Rome. Thoſe letters at length arrived; Sir Richard ſent Mrs. Biddulph an order on his banker for four hundred pounds, the ſum ſhe was arreſted for, at the ſame time acquainting her, in very explicit terms, that it was the laſt aſſiſtance ſhe would ever receive from him, as he was going a very long tour, and ſhould not return to England for ſome years; alſo, that her example had been of a very

evil tendency to his domeſtic happineſs, from the extravagance and levity of his wife, which coſt him much trouble to reſtrain; therefore, he ſhould not think of bringing her back to a place and connexions, ſo likely to overturn his preſent endeavours for her reformation: he concluded with giving her much good advice, which Mrs. Biddulph turned up her lip at, but pocketed the impertinence, ſhe ſaid, for the ſake of the money.

Henry's letter came ſome time after, with an order for *five* hundred pounds, all the money he could command at that time from his allowance, and indeed he muſt have ſuffered ſome pecuniary difficulties himſelf, to accommodate her with it. He lamented his inability to do any thing for William, and gently intimated his ſurpriſe at the derangement of their circumſtances. He inquired very particularly after his ſiſter, and promiſed to allow her one hundred a year for a trifling aſſiſtance to them, until he came of age, when he

he hoped to find them intitled to expect greater proofs of his brotherly love.

Such was the purport of Henry's letter; and ſuch was the return his kindneſs met with, that on the eve of their departure from England, William was baſe enough to write, and wound the feelings of a brother, by a recital of his ſiſter's infamy, which he painted with the malice of a fiend.

Having received theſe ſums, one card more was played to increaſe their ſtock. William wrote to his unworthy wife, ſaying, that he had a proſpect of deliverance at hand, and intended going abroad; if therefore Lord N—— would advance him a ſum of money, he would engage never to give him any trouble, or make any further demands. After ſeveral negociations between them, five hundred pounds was paid into his hands, and he bound himſelf to leave the lady entirely free.

The Jew now had perfected his ſchemes; the creditors compounded to receive ten ſhillings in the pound, and wait three years for the remainder. They were both liberated, and *his* debts were paid in that proportion by the Jew, beſides receiving from him one thouſand pounds (how it was procured, will be known hereafter) Mrs. Biddulph alſo poſſeſſed upwards of ſix hundred; and with theſe ſums they privately embarked for America, with exulting hearts, and without the leaſt remorſe for their frauds or follies.

Eliza received a few lines from her mother the night previous to their ſailing, in which ſhe ſtill avered they were going to the Weſt-Indies, and never once mentioned the ſums of money ſhe had received from Sir Richard Fancourt or Henry, but left her to form her own conjectures reſpecting the friends who had ſo eſſentially ſerved them.

Mr. and Mrs. Barrow ſaid but little, yet they nevertheleſs rejoiced, that relations ſo diſgraceful,

diſgraceful, had quitted the country, and endeavoured, by redoubled kindneſs, to comfort their ward. Some months paſſed away, and nothing material took place; Eliza received no letter from her mother, and was exceedingly uneaſy at her ſilence; added to which, the accounts Mr. Barrow now and then had from town, of the profligate and unbluſhing effrontery of Catherine, was a ſource of additional diſquietude to a delicate and affectionate mind like her's, and ſhe felt for the grief and mortification a worthy brother muſt endure, on his return to England, at the diſgraceful conduct of an only ſiſter.

One day, when ſhe was ſitting in a very penſive mood, Mr. Barrow entered the room with a letter in his hand,

"For me!" exclaimed ſhe, ſtarting up.

"Yes," anſwered he, "from your friend Henry."

She haſtily opened the letter.

"Ah!" cried ſhe, "what a loſs! what a misfortune! dear ſir, Mr. Mead is dead!"

"Dead!" repeated Mr. Barrow, "that is indeed an irreparable loſs to Mr. Biddulph, for he was a worthy man."

"Indeed he was," ſaid Eliza, "and Henry is very much grieved; he died of a putrid fever and ſore throat, he ſays, and he had alſo been ill of the ſame diſorder, but thank heaven, happily recovered; he tells me he ſhall be in England in leſs than three months, by the time he becomes of age; he has had a letter from William Biddulph, that has ſeverely afflicted him; I gueſs the contents," added ſhe, "I dare ſay the cruel wretch has informed him of Catherine's ſituation."

"Moſt likely," replied Mr. Barrow, "I am ſorry to ſay, that I think him capable of any wickedneſs or inſult whatever."

Poor

Poor Eliza ſighed, from a conviction of the truth of the obſervation, and had no ſource of conſolation, but what aroſe from the kindneſs of Henry, whoſe return ſhe looked forward to, with equal pleaſure and anxiety; ſhe counted the days and weeks, and when within a fortnight of his being of age, her heart was in a continual flutter at every knock at the door. Three weeks however paſſed over beyond the time ſhe expected him, and a painful ſtate of doubt and uneaſineſs took poſſeſſion of her mind, which ſhe was ſuddenly relieved from by a note from him, announcing his arrival in town, and intention of calling on her the following day. That day, ſo long expected, and ſo ardently wiſhed for, now found her agitated and apprehenſive; and when the carriage ſtopped at the door, ſhe found it difficult to rally her ſpirits, and receive him without betraying too much emotion.

Henry flew to embrace her with evident delight, and expreſſed a lively ſenſe of plea-

ſure in the meeting; he embraced and thanked Mr. and Mrs. Barrow, for their kind attention to his beloved couſin, whoſe eyes ſparkled with delight at the marks he gave her of his affection. After mutual congratulations were over, he lamented the death of Mr. Mead, as of a friend reſpectable and beloved, and to whom he owed a thouſand obligations for his care and inſtructions. He then inquired very particularly into the ſtate of his family affairs, and was extremely ſhocked with the repreſentation Mr. Barrow unwillingly, for his ſake, drew of their ſituation. He was not ſorry, indeed, that William and his mother had quitted England; but the idea of his ſiſter living in a ſtate of infamy, was a ſevere affliction, and he expreſſed an immediate reſolution of addreſſing Catherine, and drawing her from her preſent ſituation, if ſhe had one ſpark of virtue yet remaining. He told Eliza he was under the neceſſity of returning to town to ſettle his affairs, but that within a week he ſhould haſten to Stanmore,

more, with a hope to perfect a ſcheme of happineſs he had long been meditating.

Theſe words, and the tender looks that accompanied them, gave Eliza a ſecret delight, though ſhe endeavoured to repreſs the flattering ideas they ſeemed to encourage, leſt ſhe ſhould be too ſanguine. They parted with an emotion on both ſides, that plainly indicated the feelings of their hearts. Mr. Barrow, at Henry's requeſt, accompanied him to town, and Mrs. Barrow, after they had left Stanmore, congratulated Eliza on an affection, very apparent, ſhe ſaid, and which ſhe thought gave promiſe of much future felicity to Henry and her young friend.

CHAP. X.

THE fourth day after Henry's departure, Eliza received the following letter from Mr. Barrow.

MY DEAR WARD,

On our arrival in town, Mr. Biddulph's firſt ſtep was to write a very affectionate note to his ſiſter, requeſting to ſee her at our lodgings, or any place ſhe would appoint. The ſervant returned with a verbal anſwer, that ſhe would write the next morning; in conſequence of this meſſage, he remained at home the

the whole morning, whilſt I went out on other buſineſs. On my return, I found him walking the room in great agitation of ſpirits. He had received the promiſed anſwer, which was ſimply a cold compliment to him on his arrival from abroad, and her ſorrow that ſhe could not have the pleaſure of ſeeing him, as ſhe had previouſly fixed on that day to accompany a party to the continent, whom neither good breeding or *inclination*, would permit her to diſappoint; ſhe muſt therefore defer the interview he requeſted, until her return to England, the exact time of which was not yet ſettled.

Henry, extremely provoked, flew away to her houſe, which was within a few doors of Lord N——, for they did not, it ſeems, openly reſide in the ſame houſe together. Here he received information from a maid ſervant, that her miſtreſs had left town at five in the morning, with Lord N——, in a poſt-chaiſe and four, accompanied by two more ladies and gentlemen, but that neither ſhe, nor

Lord

Lord N——'s ſervants, knew the route they had taken, but believed they were gone to France.

You may eaſily conceive, my dear Eliza, what the feelings of a brother muſt be at this intelligence, which precluded every hope of interference to her advantage. When I came to him, I found him very irreſolute how to act, and half determined to purſue them, and force her from Lord N——; but I ſoon pointed out the inefficacy of ſuch a proceeding: as a married woman, he had not the leaſt authority over her—from affection for her friends, or compunction for her vices and follies, he had nothing to hope;—and was it even poſſible to trace them, inſult and diſappointment was all he could expect. He ſeemed pretty ſenſible of the force of theſe, and other arguments I adduced, to make him alter his purpoſe; and another conſideration, which I ſhall leave him to explain, conſiderably ſtrengthened them, and at length brought him to a reſolution of giving

ing up his firſt intention, though his grief and mortification is extreme.

We are now buſily employed in ſettling all his affairs of wardſhip in chancery; in three days you may expect us, and I truſt you will receive ſuch an addition to your happineſs, as will be permanent, at leaſt as much ſo, as we have a right to expect in this tranſitory life;

Your affectionate kinſman,

R. BARROW.

This letter gave Eliza a mixture of pain and pleaſure, that was undeſcribable; the emotions of her heart too plainly convinced her of its ſtrong predilection in favour of Henry; at the ſame time, her modeſt diffidence of her own merits, and the great inequality in point of fortune between them, gave her a ſenſe of inferiority, that was very painful to a delicate mind; and when ſhe ſaw Mr. Barrow and his young friend alight at the

gate, two days after the receipt of the letter, ſhe was ſo overcome with a variety of confuſed ſenſations, as to be very little capable of giving them that welcome they were intitled to expect. Henry, however, was too much taken up with the pleaſure of ſeeing her again, to obſerve her emotions, and in a little time ſhe recovered her ſpirits.

The following day he freely diſcloſed his long concealed attachment, and ſolicited the intereſt of Mr. and Mrs. Barrow in his favour, which was cheerfully given, and the happy Eliza made no difficulty of owning the preference he had obtained in her heart. Where inclinations ſo well accorded, every preliminary was ſoon ſettled; it was agreed on, that within ten days, they ſhould be united, and after ſtaying a month with their friends, go to town, and hire a ready furniſhed houſe for ſix months; by which time, Henry's houſe in the country, let out during his minority, would be ready to receive them.

His

His eſtate was twelve hundred a year; he ſettled three of it on his Eliza, as a jointure; and the four thouſand pounds in the ſtocks, with the accumulation of intereſt on that, and the ſavings from his eſtate, (which was an intailed one) on his younger children, amounting in all to about eight thouſand pounds.

This equitable and prudent diſpoſal of his property, afforded Mr. Barrow the higheſt ſatisfaction, and convinced him of his rectitude and good ſenſe; he ſaw every proſpect of happineſs for his amiable ward, and partook largely in their promiſed felicity.

The appointed day ſoon arrived, which united Henry and Eliza, and the month they had engaged to ſpend at Stanmore, paſſed rapidly away in the ſweets of love and friendſhip.

Mr. Biddulph had ſent to an agent in London, to procure him a houſe, and at the expiration

piration of the month, accompanied by Mrs. Barrow, the happy pair ſet off for town. As neither had much acquaintance, they were unmoleſted by impertinent viſitors, and Mr. Biddulph was attached to no amuſements but one, in which his wife took equal delight, that one was muſic. During his reſidence abroad, Mr. Mead had been extremely careful to guard him from extravagant diſſipations, and improper company: he obſerved his paſſion for muſic, and permitted its full ſcope, as it filled up his leiſure hours agreeably, and detached him from gambling, and idle, if not vicious, connexions.

After Mr. Mead's death, Mr. Biddulph indulged himſelf more than ever in his favourite amuſement; he played remarkably well on the violencello, and contracted intimacies with a number of performers, who had little other merit to boaſt of than their muſical abilities.

On

On his arrival in town, and getting ſettled, he fitted up an elegant muſic room; engaged ſeveral performers of both ſexes, and fixed on one day in every week for a public concert.

Mrs. Biddulph was delighted with his taſte for muſic, yet began to conſider on the expences attending it, as rather too much for perſons of their moderate fortune; at the ſame time ſhe did not think herſelf entitled to make any objections to a plan her huſband derived ſo much pleaſure from. They had been in town about ſix weeks, during which period, Mrs. Barrow had returned to Stanmore, happy in the proſpect of her young friend's mutual felicity, and warmly attached to them for the many virtues that were conſpicuous in their general conduct. She had quitted them about a fortnight; they had compleated their muſic-room, and the day for opening it, with a ſelect band of the principal performers in town, and a few viſitors whom Mr. Biddulph had known abroad, and renewed

renewed his acquaintance with, ſince his return to London, now arrived. On that morning, whilſt he was buſy, giving directions to his ſervants, he was informed two men begged to ſpeak with him on buſineſs of importance; he was rather a little ſurpriſed, and ordered their names to be ſent in; the ſervant returned, one of them was called "Nathan," he ſaid, the other's name was of no conſequence. He immediately ordered their admittance; this "Nathan" was the Jew to whom he had given a bond to raiſe the money for William Biddulph's uſe, and to whom he had ſent the moment he came to town, with an intent to diſcharge it, but was informed he was at that time gone over to Holland: he was glad therefore the man attended, as he wiſhed to ſettle the affair, perfectly ſenſible that he never ſhould recover one ſhilling from William.

On their entrance, he received them civilly, and recollected the man with Nathan to have witneſſed the bond, with another perſon, who

who did not then appear. The Jew, with many ſcrapes, and much fawning civility, produced the bond, and ſaid he was come to receive the ſeven thouſand five hundred pounds.

"You are a little out in your calculation, my good friend," ſaid Mr. Biddulph, ſmiling, "hundreds, inſtead of thouſands, will be nearer the mark."

"Sir!" cried the Jew, rolling his black eyes, and ſcowling under the buſhy brows that hung over them; "Sir, I believe you are joking, I am ſure I ſpeakes the truth; ſeven thouſand five hundred pounds is the monies due on the bond."

"You have not peruſed it lately, I believe, Nathan, and your memory is treacherous," anſwered Mr. Biddulph, careleſly, "come give it me."

Nathan,

Nathan, with all due ſolemnity, ſeated himſelf on one ſide of Mr. Biddulph, as the ſtranger did on the other, and then unfolding the parchment, and ſlightly glancing over it, with his finger pointed out, to the utter aſtoniſhment of the bondee, the actual words ſeven thouſand five hundred pounds, inſtead of the expected ſum of ſeven hundred and fifty.

"Sure I am dreaming," cried he, "or this bond cannot be mine."

"Look again, ſir, ſure enough you muſt dream," replied Nathan, "if you do not remember the monies, nor know your own hand," turning to the ſignatures.

"By heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Biddulph, "I never ſigned my name to a bond for this ſum; 'tis an impudent forgery; William Biddulph never had the money; nor could I ever think of being anſwerable for a debt of this magnitude."

"I know

" I know not what you might *think*, ſir," replied the other, " or how much your hurry or ears might deceive you, but this here gentleman was witneſs to your ſigning the bond, and this here receipt for the monies, will prove your brother had it of me.

Mr. Biddulph looked at the receipt; it was William's ſignature, and acknowledgment for ſeven thouſand five hundred pounds; he again examined the bond, it appeared fair and clear, exactly as he remembered the one he put his name to; that name he ſaw was his own hand writing; every thing was right but the ſum, and there was no appearance of any eraſure or alteration of words whatever—the more he looked at it, the more he was convinced it was the ſame bond; yet what a difference in the penalty! " ſure I was neither drunk nor mad," cried he, " when I entered my brother's houſe, yet it was impoſſible, without being one or the other, that I could be guilty of ſo much imprudence. Gentlemen, I am entirely unprepared to ſettle a demand

a demand of this nature, and muſt conſult my ſolicitor upon the buſineſs."

"Ah! this is the way," ſaid Nathan, ſhrugging his ſhoulders, and knitting his formidable brows of black bruſh; "this is the way with young extravagant heirs; when they have got the monies, they make no conſcience of cheating us honeſt poor fellows, that ſupply their wants."

"Cheating!" repeated Mr. Biddulph, whoſe temper began to grow warm; "have a care, ſir, what you ſay; I ſcorn to avail myſelf of the paltry privilege of not being one and twenty when I entered into the engagement, I came to you with a ready intention to diſcharge; I could deſign no mean ſubterfuge, when I voluntarily ſent after you; but I aſk you both, for both were preſent, was it not for a debt of ſix hundred pounds that I became bound, to procure the money to pay?"

"No,

"No, on my conſcience," anſwered the Jew, "your brother did owe more than ſeven thouſand, and it was exactly for this very ſum you became anſwerable; and I will bring another witneſs to ſwear it alſo."

"Well," ſaid Mr. Biddulph, "call on me three days hence, about this hour; I ſhall conſider on the buſineſs, and if the money has been paid Mr. William Biddulph, on my bond, and you can prove his debts were diſcharged to the amount you ſpeak of, I ſhall then conſider what honour and juſtice obliges me to perform; for be aſſured, no man ſhall be a ſufferer by me, whatever is the conſequence to myſelf."

This declaration appeared to give all the ſatisfaction it was intended, for Nathan took leave with a hundred low bows, aſſuring Mr. Biddulph, "upon *his conſcience* he was an honeſt man, and wanted no more than what was juſtly his due."

CHAP. XI.

IT would be difficult to deſcribe the agitation Mr. Biddulph was thrown into by this unexpected demand; he was ſenſible that it was impoſſible he ever could have entered into a bond for ſo large a ſum, as he had no means of paying, without the greateſt inconvenience to himſelf. The tranſaction had been ſo haſty that morning at William Biddulph's, that it afforded neither time or opportunity for any colluſion or duplicity; yet the ſignature of this bond was certainly his own writing; nor was there the leaſt appearance

ance of any fraud or eraſure in any part of it. Extremely diſturbed, he ſent for his ſolicitor, and laying before him the whole buſineſs, requeſted he would look over the bond, and examine the perſons concerned.

This affair ſo ruffled his temper, that he found it very difficult to aſſume an appearance of eaſe before his wife; (from whom, in delicacy to her feelings, he had concealed every part of the obligations he had conferred on William and his mother) and ſtill more to receive his company in the evening, and join in a muſical performance, when his mind was torn by painful conjectures and vexatious apprehenſions. Little accuſtomed to diſſimulation, he could not ſo far command himſelf, but that Mrs. Biddulph ſaw ſomething extraordinary in his manner; a reſerve unuſual, and an abſence of mind ſeveral times in the courſe of the evening, that alarmed her for his health. When the company had left them, ſhe could not forbear obſerving, "that he had not appeared to enjoy his party with the pleaſure he had promiſed to himſelf."

"Why indeed, my love," anſwered he, "we are apt to be too ſanguine in our expectations of pleaſure, and I confeſs, I was not altogether ſo much amuſed as I had hoped for, but our next ſcratch may turn out better, as we can improve upon our plan, and get things in more order."

She appeared to be ſatisfied with this reply, and no more was ſaid on the ſubject.

The following evening his ſolicitor called, to acquaint him with the reſult of the buſineſs he had been engaged in; he had examined both the bond and the witneſſes; the firſt appeared perfectly fair, and free from error; the latter were conſiſtent and poſitive; he had ſeen vouchers for near three thouſand pounds, paid to different creditors, though he could not be certain otherwiſe than by their teſtimony, that the ſums were actually paid by the money raiſed on the bond: he had no doubt, from Mr. Biddulph's account of the tranſaction, and the very indifferent

ferent character that two out of the four witneſſes were known by, but that ſome fraud had been committed, and he thought his client would be very juſtifiable in refuſing to pay the bond, and ſtand an action, if they were diſpoſed to bring it forward.

"Mr. Biddulph ſaid, he would take that night to conſider, and give his determination the next day."

When he came to reflect on the affair, he was thoroughly perſuaded he had been infamouſly deceived; and that although he was told that ſeven hundred and fifty pounds was the ſum he gave a bond to pay, he could not ſwear that he read that ſum ſpecified in the bond: on the contrary, it was *read to him*, and in the hurry and anxiety of the moment, unſuſpicious of deception, and unacquainted with ſuch affairs, he ſlightly glanced his eyes over it, and ſigned without heſitation. What then was to be done? he might conteſt it as a fraud—he might avail himſelf of his non-

age; both were repugnant to his feelings;—could he wound the boſom of his Eliza, by ſtamping her brother as a villain in a court of juſtice? where even his ſucceſs might be very doubtful, from the proofs that could be adduced againſt him; or could he bear to be conſidered in the light of an extravagant young man, who had raiſed money upon uſury, and now ſought to avoid paying a juſt debt, on a plea of being under age? his tenderneſs for his wife, and his integrity, equally militated againſt either; nothing then remained for him, but to pay this money; nor any way to do that, but to mortgage his eſtate to raiſe it; for as has been before obſerved, what money he had in the funds, had been ſecured to his wife and younger children, in the hands of truſtees, for their uſe hereafter. Painful and mortifying was the alternative; he muſt involve himſelf in pecuniary difficulties—be compelled to leſſen his expences, and alter the eſtabliſhment of his houſhold; (as the payment of ſo much money muſt be a conſiderable drawback on his income) de-

prive

prive his dear Eliza of many indulgencies his affection would have ſought out for her accommodation, and all this to ſerve a worthleſs diſhoneſt wretch, who had practiſed on his youth and credulity, and had fled to a diſtant country to enjoy his ill-gotten ſpoils. The reflection almoſt diſtracted him, but he haſtened to get rid of the oppreſſion upon his mind, and within a week, though very contrary to the advice of his attorney, the money was procured, and the bond diſcharged.

It was impoſſible, during this time, but that the agitation of his ſpirits muſt have been too viſible to his amiable wife; ſhe was exceedingly diſtreſſed by the obſervation, and more ſo, from the concealment of the cauſe; yet relying on his affection and honour, ſhe endeavoured to repreſs her curioſity, and hide her anxiety: but returning one morning and entering her dreſſing-room unexpectedly, he ſurpriſed her in tears; his tenderneſs caught the alarm, and being unable to aſſign any cauſe for thoſe tears, but the true one, it

brought on an explanation between them, and concealing the ſhare her unworthy brother had in the baſe deception, he mentioned it as the villany of a juvenile acquaintance, and ſolicited her forgiveneſs of his folly, which had involved *her* in its puniſhment.

Eliza, who had ſuffered for many days great inquietude, and was apprehenſive of ſome heavy evil, felt this information comparatively light; far from repining at the decreaſe in their fortune, with a look of infinite tenderneſs, ſhe chid her huſband for indulging a moment's pain on her account; aſſured him, his income, if ſtill leſs, would be amply ſufficient to gratify all her wiſhes, and that ſhe felt no other regret, than that his goodneſs and generoſity had met with ſuch an unworthy return; for the reſt, "my dear Biddulph," ſaid ſhe, ſmiling, "if you can reconcile *your* mind to ſacrifice a few of the gaieties of life to domeſtic happineſs, it ſhall be my care, by every exertion that can procure you pleaſure there, to prevent you from ſighing

ſighing after thoſe which prudence, perhaps, may compel you to reſign."

Charmed with the eaſe and good humour of his wife, Mr. Biddulph warmly embraced and thanked her; the oppreſſion of his mind was greatly relieved, and he conſulted with her on forming a plan ſuitable to their income, and the moderate, though genteel ſtyle of life they would henceforth be enabled to ſupport. Muſic they were both fond of; they had already incurred a great expence in preparing for their concerts, and therefore, both readily inclined to continue that entertainment; but to circumſcribe the number of their acquaintance; to give no dinners, nor enter into any expenſive parties; to keep no carriage, nor any unneceſſary ſervants. All theſe things they found would be abſolutely right to give up, that they might be enabled to ſave ſomething every year, towards paying off the mortgage on their eſtate. Satisfied with theſe arrangements, cheerfulneſs once more returned to their boſoms, and

each party ſought, by an increaſe of good-humour and tenderneſs, to prevent the other from regretting the ſacrifices prudence had made neceſſary.

A twelvemonth paſſed away without any material occurrence, except the birth of a ſon, which event highly delighted Mr. Biddulph and his amiable wife; but her recovery being rather tedious, and her health delicate, they reſolved to ſpend a few months in the country; they accordingly ſet off for the manſion of their fore-fathers, and arrived at Myrtle-Vale with mutual ſatisfaction. Change of air, good hours, and moderate exerciſe, had its uſual effects; Mrs. Biddulph was ſoon reſtored to health, and their little boy derived great benefit from the pure air of the country. They had reſided here near three months in the moſt perfect harmony, when by a ſudden, and an unhappy accident, their bliſs was fatally interrupted and cruelly deſtroyed.

One

One night when they had been ſome hours in bed, Mr. Biddulph was awakened by a violent effort he had made in his ſleep, from dreaming he was almoſt ſtrangled; alas! there was but too much of reality in his dream, for the room was entirely filled with ſmoke, and he could ſcarcely reſpire; extremely alarmed, he gently diſturbed his wife, and jumping out of bed, ran to open the door of his apartment, and in the ſame inſtant diſcovered the flames aſcending up the ſtaircaſe. Mrs. Biddulph, who in her fright had followed him, ſtruck with the ſame dreadful view, gave a great ſhriek, and ſunk on the floor. Her terrified huſband called loudly for the ſervants, and ſeeing it was impoſſible to get down ſtairs, caught up his fainting wife in his arms, and flew up the attic ſtaircaſe, from whence there was a door that opened on the leads, ſurrounded by a parapet wall. As he continued his exclamations, the ſervants were ſoon rouſed, and finding the lower part of the houſe was in flames, haſtened to ring the alarm bell.

A farmer who rented part of the eſtate, and lived but at a ſmall diſtance, was awakened by the ſound, and from his windows beheld the awful ſight; he loſt no time in flying to their aſſiſtance, with ſome of his men, and ſoon diſcovered the unfortunate ſufferers were on the leads. Having procured ladders, with the utmoſt riſque of their lives, the flames iſſuing from every window, they planted them between the windows of one wing that did not burn ſo furiouſly as the other parts of the houſe, and called on Mr. Biddulph to make his eſcape; with extreme difficulty, and with the aſſiſtance of the farmer, who was a ſtrong athletic man, the ſtill inſenſible Eliza was brought in his arms ſafely to the ground. Her huſband had nearly followed her in ſafety, when he ſuddenly, and for the firſt time (ſo ſtupid had the fright rendered him) recollected his child, who, with its nurſe, ſlept in an adjoining room to their own; running again up the ladder, regardleſs of the increaſing flames, he called wildly on the nurſe, and would certainly

tainly have inſtantly periſhed, had not the good farmer, apprized of his imminent danger, and convinced his attempts to regain the parapet were uſeleſs, quickly followed him, and exclaiming, "She is ſafe; all is ſafe," obliged him, ſcarcely in his ſenſes, to deſcend; one moment later, and he muſt have periſhed, for the building, againſt which the ladder reſted, fell in, and all further aid was at an end.

But who can paint the diſtraction of the unhappy father, when arriving at the farmhouſe, and eagerly inquiring for his child, neither nurſe nor infant could be ſeen; a man ſervant and a ſtable boy was alſo miſſing, and they had but two much reaſon to fear all had periſhed. Even thoſe that were ſaved, were entirely deſtitute of covering, and were ſcorched in their hands, and other parts of their bodies. Regardleſs of his ſituation, Mr. Biddulph would have flown back to the burning ruins, and was with difficulty reſtrained one moment, whilſt he was accommodated with

with a pair of ſhoes and a great coat, all the covering his impatience would admit of.

They returned to the dreadful ſcene; a number of the neighbourhood were by this time aſſembled; he flew through the crowd from place to place; braved a thouſand apparent dangers, to ſeek the beloved object of his cares, but all was in vain; no traces could be found; no intelligence gained of the nurſe, her infant charge, or of the man and boy; there was but two much reaſon to believe they had periſhed in the flames, and were buried beneath the ſmoaking ruins. Thus, in one night, the unhappy Mr. Biddulph was compleatly undone; his domeſtic enjoyments for ever deſtroyed; his child a victim to a dreadful calamity, that almoſt ſhook reaſon from her ſeat to behold; and his beloved wife doomed to experience, on the recovery of her ſenſes, the knowledge of an event, that muſt at leaſt embitter her future days. How uncertain the duration of

happineſs,

happineſs, and how ſoon obſcured our faireſt proſpects of felicity in this life.

In a ſtate of horror, not to be deſcribed, Mr. Biddulph was at length prevailed upon to return with the ſympathizing farmer; inſenſible of his ſituation, the exceſs of his miſery had benumbed all his faculties, and until he entered the apartment where his poor wife lay, and whoſe ſenſes were feebly reſuming their functions; until his eyes met her's, he had appeared inattentive and inanimate; but when he beheld her, with a deep groan throwing himſelf on his knees by the ſide of the bed,

"Oh! Eliza, my dear wife! all is over, we can ſuffer no more.——No!" exclaimed he, with a wildneſs in his manner, that terrified every one; "no, where every hope is extinct, all is fixed deſpair."

Incapable of ſpeaking, Mrs. Biddulph eagerly gazed on her huſband with a look of horrour,

horrour, that ſpoke a thouſand unutterable things; ſhe graſped his hand, and drawing it to her lips, the tenderneſs of the action touched his heart, and inſtantly he burſt into a violent paroxiſm of tears, that relieved the oppreſſion of *his* boſom, whilſt it deeply affected every one preſent, who were the childred of nature, and would have "ſcorned the proud man that was aſhamed to weep." *His* tears were contagious; his wife's inſtantly flowed, and for ſeveral minutes precluded ſpeech, but it had given vent to the o'ercharged heart, and when the violence of them had a little ſubſided, a painful idea obtruded on her mind, and ſhe exclaimed with an earneſt and frighted look,

"My child! where is my little Frederic?"

The wretched father could make no reply; all were ſilent; ſhe gazed on every drooping eye, and preſently comprehended the extent of her misfortunes; a heavy groan ſpoke the

feelings

feelings of her heart; her huſband embraced her;

"Spare me, ſpare yourſelf, ſubmit to the Almighty will," was all he could utter, and more than ſhe heard, for ſhe was again deprived of her ſenſes, and for ſeveral hours hovered between life and death; the ſtruggle at length terminated favourably, and both life and reaſon were reſtored; if reſtoration it could be called, to be ſenſible of her extreme miſery, and endure a heart-felt ſorrow, where every hope was extinguiſhed.

During near a fortnight that Mrs. Biddulph's illneſs confined her at the humane farmer's, her unfortunate huſband had cauſed every ſearch to be made among the ruins for the body of his child, and thoſe of the ſervants miſſing; but their labour was ineffectual, and they were convinced the unhappy ſufferers muſt have been entirely conſumed. The whole was a heap of ruins, not one valuable was ſaved from the devouring flames;

flames; and what compleated the misfortune was, that no part of the property loſt, had been inſured. Whilſt Mr. Biddulph was a minor, his guardians had taken care to inſure his houſe and furniture, and when he became of age, and every thing reſigned up, they had ſhewn him the policy, and noted the time of its expiration; he had even received notice from the office ſome months previous to this event, but unhappily it was at a time when his mind was occupied by the villany of William Biddulph, and he either forgot, or neglected to pay the inſurance, conſequently all was now loſt; he had no claims, no reſources.

The mortgagee hearing of the diſtreſsful ſituation he was in, like a true man of the world, eager to ſave and ſerve himſelf, haſtened down; he upbraided the unfortunate man for his negligence, and inſiſted upon having an equivalent to the houſe and furniture, granted to him from the eſtate.

Mr.

Mr. Biddulph, unable to contend with ſelfiſhneſs and brutality, under the name of ſelf-preſervation and juſtice; borne down with calamity, and unwilling that his neighbours ſhould know the ſtate of his affairs, blindly ſubmitted to every thing; and in ſhort, by granting further ſecurities, added to his recent loſſes, he found himſelf, on ſumming up his effects, to be in the receipts of leſs than two hundred a year; the property he had in town, on a moderate computation, could not exceed fourteen or fifteen hundred pounds, if diſpoſed of, therefore he had little hopes of ever being able to redeem the mortgage. He now ſaw himſelf reduced to live on a very narrow income, and his heart bled for the diſtreſs his wife now ſuffered, and what ſhe had yet to endure, when all the dreadful conſequences of his neglect and inattention came to her knowledge.

Upwards of a fortnight was elapſed, and this unhappy pair mutually ſought to hide their ſufferings, and ſpeak comfort to each other,

other, alas! very foreign to their hearts. They were one morning conſulting on their future plans, Mrs. Biddulph juſt able to leave her bed, and ſupport herſelf a few hours in a chair, when Mrs. Maſon, the hoſpitable miſtreſs of the houſe, knocked for admittance; on entering, ſhe delivered a letter to Mr. Biddulph, ſaying, "My Lord Burley's ſervant waits for an anſwer.

Whilſt Mr. Biddulph is peruſing this letter, we may give a haſty ſketch of Lord Burley, and his very faſhionable Lady, who had an eſtate, and a moſt noble houſe, only three miles from Myrtle-Vale; they had heard of young Biddulph and his wife, and thought when cuſtom and faſhion obliged them to be buried for a few months among the groves of their forefathers, "this Squire Biddulph and *his help-mate*, might *help them* to muddle away a few heavy hours, when no other company was preſent; for at any rate they muſt be better than the Vicar and his dame, or Mrs. Weſtcote and her pert daughter."

His

His Lordſhip was near fifty, and having been early initiated into faſhionable life, elegant vices, and "delicate crimes," which he had conſtantly adhered to from his juvenile days: it happened very unfortunately, that his conſtitution was impaired, his perſon ſtrangely altered, his limbs frequently tortured by gouty paroxiſms, and with all the vanity of five and twenty, and an inclination to gallantry, that might ſhame one of that age; he was eternally mortified by the plain truths which his looking-glaſs reflected, and boiling with rage at the impertinence of young boys, who thruſt themſelves before him, and attracted that attention from the ladies, he was ſtill ſo deſirous of obtaining. Every art was employed to hide the defects which time, and an unreſtrained licentiouſneſs, rendered but too viſible; and every pretty woman was ſubject to his diſguſtful and inſulting gallantries.

Such was Lord Burley; his Lady was near thirty, and had been married at eighteen; ſhe was

was the daughter of a man of faſhion, but of ſmall fortune, who never conſidered the diſproportion of years, when a title and a large eſtate were the offered advantages; the young lady, who had early learnt the value of rank and riches, gladly coincided with her father's views, followed his advice, and behaved with that decorum and apparent diſintereſtedneſs, with now and then ſuch little lapſes, as indicated her preferable affection for him, that the enamoured Peer was completely caught, and one day, in the warmth of paſſion, made an offer of his hand and fortune to the beautiful, *tender* Arabella, and her *worthy undeſigning* father. As this was the point long laboured for, it was inſtantly accepted, and every preparation ſo hurried, that the lover had no time for repentance or evaſion.

After the marriage had taken place, and the Lady been properly introduced, his vanity received abundant gratification from the admiration ſhe excited, and the praiſes of the beautiful Lady Burley, which reſounded from

every tongue, and was paragraphed in every paper; nor was the Lady unconſcious of the effect that her charms produced in the attentions of the men, and the envy of the women.

For a few months all was pleaſure and rapture; but alas! novelties, after a time, loſe their effect, and violent paſſions muſt ſubſide and ſink into a calm.

Her Ladyſhip was grown familiar with a coronet; an elegant equipage was as little regarded; her fine clothes, her jewels, had been exhibited at every public place, and even her lovely perſon, though generally admired, ceaſed to draw that eager obſervation, that crowd of followers, which in the firſt two or three months of her appearance in the circles of faſhion, conſtantly attended her ſteps, and gave ſuch inexpreſſible delight to her ſelf-love. Nothing now was new, every thing had been ſeen; ſhe had heard the ſame praiſes, the ſame compliments, a thouſand times

times over, and the repetition, which ſeemed mere words of courſe, began to grow tireſome. She turned her eyes on her domeſtic pleaſures, they were not ſuch as to afford much ſatisfaction in the proſpect; ſtability, either in love or ſentiment, made no part of his Lordſhip's character; he had married to gratify paſſion, not from a permanent or juſt affection, founded on eſteem; love like his, therefore, muſt ſoon ſubſide, and even his vanity ceaſed to be intereſted on his lady's account; his devoirs were paid to other women; his abſences frequent; his treatment of her cool, though polite, and regret, more than once, at his haſty engagement, laid hold of his mind, and tinctured every word and action with indifference.

A young lovely and vain woman, whoſe motives in marrying were entirely ſelf-gratification, without either love or eſteem for the man ſhe was united to, by ſuch conduct on his ſide, was thrown into a perilous ſituation, which was quickly obſerved by men of gallantry

gallantry and intrigue; and in a ſhort time, one more inſinuating than the reſt of her admirers, found means to touch her heart, gratify her vanity, and lull the feeble efforts of virtue and honour aſleep, whilſt vice and artifice triumphed over both.

This intrigue was not long unobſerved by Lord Burley; his pride at firſt took the alarm, and his determination was to watch for a detection, and obtain a divorce: but in the cool hour of reflection, he felt conſcious that his lady could recriminate; that he muſt expoſe himſelf to the ridicule of the world; that he muſt allow her a ſeparate maintenance, and endure the laugh of his companions, who very unjuſtly, though they muſt condemn and deſpiſe the wife, would point the finger of ſcorn at himſelf, or inſult him with a pity, ſtill more mortifying.

All theſe reflections occurred, and had their full weight; after mature conſideration

 therefore,

therefore, he one morning addreſſed her in the following words."

" I am no ſtranger to your irregularities, Madam, and might take a ſevere revenge, by expoſing you to the public, but you are too indifferent to me now, for me to take that trouble; whilſt you have common prudence, I ſhall exert no controul over your actions; you are to take no notice of mine; we will live in the ſame houſe, eat at the ſame table; meet occaſionally in the ſame parties, and join in invitations to our ſeveral friends; thus we ſhall preſerve appearances, live in peace and freedom, without diſagreeable recriminations, or being objects of ridicule to the public. In return for this indulgence on my part, I expect that you behave with decency, and endeavour to preſerve your own reputation and mine; that you contract no debts beyond the handſome ſum allowed for your expences; and never preſume, in any ſhape, to interfere either with my buſineſs or pleaſures."

" Agreed,

"Agreed, my Lord, (replied ſhe, briſkly) I give you my word that you ſhall have no cauſe for complaint: I adore your prudence and good nature, we ſhall be an immenſely happy couple, and the admiration of all our acquaintance."

Thus this faſhionable pair, having got rid of ſuch troubleſome companions as love and jealouſy, lived very pleaſantly together; enjoyed every gratification of their wiſhes, and under the ſanction of marriage, indulged in every degree of licentiouſneſs.

How infinitely are we indebted to our polite neighbours for theſe refinements, and what wonderful improvements in the poliſhed manners of the French, do our travelling young men of faſhion import into this once rough, ſincere, and liberal nation! ſeduction, adultery, gambling and ſcandal, with its other concomitants, ſome years back, bore their real names, and inſpired deteſtation and horror; in this more enlightened age, they are

ſoftened into the appellations of gallantry, faſhionable manners, amuſements, and entertaining converſation.

CHAP. XII.

LORD and Lady Burley were the envy and admiration of all their acquaintance, and if now and then ſome antiquated dowagers, or ſuperannuated old maids, preſumed to be ſcandalized at the free manners of her Ladyſhip, and envy her the admiration ſhe excited, and the train of followers that attended her, their little malice was overborne by the approbation of the modern faſhionables;

faſhionables; and whilſt Lady Burley gave elegant entertainments, made a ſplendid appearance, and was followed by a crowd, her actions eſcaped cenſure, except, perhaps, a few hints, nods, ſhrugs and ſmiles, *among her beſt friends* ſometimes, who perfectly underſtood each other, and out-vied one another in courting her ſociety.

Years rolled on, winged with pleaſure and delight to this happy couple, with no other drawback than the uſual conſequence of unreſtrained paſſions to his Lordſhip, the infirmities of a premature old age; whilſt the mind retained its activity, and every inclination for thoſe gratifications pain and diſeaſe too generally precluded the indulgence of. But however mortifying theſe circumſtances were to Lord Burley, they gave no ſort of concern to his lady; on the contrary, it afforded the additional pleaſure of hope and expectation, that in a ſhort time ſhe might be initiated into the enchanting ſituation of widowhood.

As both parties were laviſh in their expences, they found it very convenient to comply with the uſual cuſtom of leaving town for a few months in the ſummer, and retire to the ſeat of their anceſtors; where, inſtead of treating their tenants and poor neighbours with kindneſs and hoſpitality; in the room of extending their benevolence, and the good things of this world to the ſick and unfortunate, as their unpoliſhed fore-fathers uſed to do, they ſhut themſelves from ſociety—their purſes as cloſe as their hearts, and dragged through a painful penance of mere vegetation for a few months, that they might be enabled to ſhine with additional luſtre, when they emerged again into the world.

The ſpruce *Chaplain* attended them; his time was divided between playing cheſs with my Lord, and paying his court to my Lady. The Vicar of the pariſh was ſometimes admitted to take his place with the former, whilſt he profitted by the opportunity, and flew to carry his devoirs to the latter.

There

Their was only one neighbour of any conſequence near them, beſides the poſſeſſor of Myrtle-Vale; this was a Mrs. Weſtcote; ſhe was the widow of a capital Stock-Broker, who from the humble ſituation of a porter to a warehouſe, had, by much induſtry, perſeverance, and a great deal of low cunning, contrived to get into a knowledge of buſineſs, to calculate chances, and pry into all the dirty tricks of the Alley and Stock-jobbing. A tolerable perſon, and a very plauſible tongue, gained him the heart of Miſs Molly Partridge, the daughter of a wealthy Publican; a run-away match at firſt gave great offence, but Miſs was an only child, and "Sam. Weſtcote ſeemed a ſhrewd fellow, that might make his way in the world with a little help;" ſo that after a little ſwearing and bluſtering, things were amicably ſettled, and the happy couple received into the houſe. To complete their felicity, the father died within a twelve-month after their marriage, and left them in quiet poſſeſſion of near three thouſand pounds.

Then Sam. determined to become a great man; he gave up the low vulgar buſineſs of a public houſe, and reſolved "money ſhould make money;" having, during his ſervitude, and ſince his marriage, acquired ſome knowledge in the Alley manœuvres; he turned his thoughts that way, as the moſt expeditious road towards making a fortune. The event juſtified his foreſight; Lady Fortune, a blind deity, ſhowered her favours upon his endeavours; he was lucky in his calculations, ſales and bargains, and in the courſe of a few years, could boldly hold up his head, and call himſelf "*a good man*, worth upwards of a plumb;" that is, he had realized more than a hundred thouſand pounds, which immenſe ſum was daily increaſing.

See Mrs. Weſtcote now with an elegant houſe in one of the ſquares; her coach and liveries the admiration of the multitude; ſo fine, ſo taudry, and ſo belaced! in her clothes and jewels ſhe vied with a Counteſs, and her table was loaded with proviſions like a Lord-Mayor's

Mayor's feaſt. She had one daughter, that was born after the death of four other children, and in the day of full proſperity; this daughter would doubtleſs hereafter become a lady, ſhe muſt therefore have ſome genteel name, fit for her expected elevation; no vulgar Molly's or Betty's, was proper for Miſs Weſtcote. After many deliberations, and turning over a hundred novels, to find one "pretty and grand enough for her child," ſhe at length condeſcended to adopt the royal family names, and Miſs was baptized Auguſta Matilda.

This important point ſettled, and the two firſt years of childhood paſſed, a French governeſs was taken into the houſe, to educate Miſs Auguſta Matilda, with a ſtrict charge never to contradict or ſnub the dear creature, nor yet plague her with learning any thing ſhe did not like, for ſhe would have an immenſity of money, and could afford to keep men and maids to do every thing for her. This affectionate charge was ſtrictly

attended to, for the fortunate French woman was as little capable of inſtructing her pupil, as her dear mamma was deſirous of it; ſhe had cunning enough to diſcern the folly and ignorance of the mother, and that the road to her favour was ſimply to flatter her vanity, by praiſe and profound reſpect, and to give an unreſtrained indulgence to the young lady, whoſe only acquirements under her care, were to *ſpeak* fluently and pertly both French and Engliſh, but without knowing the grounds or elegancies of either language. She was taught the full value of her own conſequence in fortune, and learnt to deſpiſe thoſe leſs favoured than herſelf in that particular. She had maſters to inſtruct her in muſic, dancing and ſinging; but as the application and improvement in thoſe accompliſhments was left to her own inclination, ſhe merely learnt a ſmattering of each, without underſtanding either. She frequently attended her mother to public places, and always mixed in her parties (for even Mrs. Weſtcote had her faſhionable and crowded routs; people who partook

partook of the amuſement, whilſt they ridiculed and deſpiſed the promoter.

Miſs, though a ſtranger to good ſenſe and poliſhed manners, could eaſily diſcern the marked difference in behaviour between her mother and many of her viſitors; and having, after ſhe was fifteen, taken the trouble to peruſe a few light novels, that did not fatigue her mind, nor improve her heart, ſhe had learnt enough to value herſelf upon her ſuperiority to her mother, and to ſcorn her vulgarity of language and low ideas.

At the age of ſixteen, Miſs Auguſta Matilda was in perſon very tolerable; in her own opinion *beautiful*; extremely ſhallow in her underſtanding, but in the ſame partial judgment, witty and accompliſhed: fond of admiration, doating on finery and public amuſements, and heartily deſpiſing the ſtill plodding father, and the would-be lady, her ignorant and ill-bred mother!

Too generally are theſe the conſequences of ſuch imprudent indulgences, where the children of vulgar parents are educated and introduced into the world, in a ſtyle ſuperior to their birth and expectations, without being inſtructed in the decency and decorum of behaviour, abſolutely neceſſary in ſuch a caſe, to preſerve them from ridicule and contempt, and to know alſo the duty and obligations they owe to thoſe parents, whoſe induſtry has procured them the advantages they are proud of.

Mrs. Weſtcote and her daughter had continual diſſentions, but the latter always came off victorious, by pleading, or rather boaſting, her ſuperiority of education under a French governeſs, and her conſequent knowledge.

Mr. Weſtcote, whoſe ſole delight centered in getting money, (and what is not very common in a man of buſineſs, was equally as well pleaſed that his wife and daughter ſhould enjoy

enjoy and ſpend it as they liked) found riches tumbling in beyond his moſt ſanguine hopes; he had immenſe ſums in the funds; a variety of mortgages, and had purchaſed ſeveral freehold eſtates. One very fine manſion, and extenſive grounds, he had bought of a noble Duke, and *that* circumſtance, with the grandeur of the houſe, induced Mrs. Weſtcote to chooſe it for her ſummer reſidence. It was only two miles diſtant from Lord Burley's, and certainly exceeded his ſeat in every point of view, though Hartley-Grove had been for centuries the reſidence of his anceſtors, and was both handſome and reſpectable.

The Weſtcote's had no ſooner taken poſſeſſion of their ſuperb manſion, which was furniſhed in the moſt expenſive and faſhionable ſtyle, than they began to inquire about the neighbourhood, and hearing of their vicinity to Hartley-Grove, they, that is, the mother and daughter, (for as to the father, a Lord was no more in his eſtimation, than a broker, his whole ſoul being abſorbed in making

making money) began to plan a thouſand ſchemes to form an acquaintance with Lord and Lady Burley, no perſonages of that diſtinction having yet graced their circle; fortunately for their wiſhes, her Ladyſhip was equally deſirous of new faces, and of "ſome odd creatures to kill time with:" no ſooner therefore did ſhe hear of their magnificent furniture, dreſs and characters, than ſhe determined, by "way of diverſion," to amuſe herſelf with theſe "vulgar wretches;" and in conſequence of that reſolution, one morning, accompanied by the obſequious chaplain, without any ceremony drove to the hall, and was announced to the aſtoniſhed mother and daughter.

Great was the confuſion of the ladies; they looked at their dreſs; threw their eyes round the room; all to them appeared in diſorder; but there was no time to make alterations; the Lady was at the gate, they muſt ſee her and that immediately; 'twas impoſſible to decline an honour they were ſo anxious to have conferred

conferred on them, and therefore ſhe was admitted, and on her appearance, ſo overwhelmed with compliments, apologies, ſenſibilities of her Ladyſhip's goodneſs, condeſcenſion and ſo forth, that ſhe was highly delighted with her viſit, and her own ſelf-conſequence ſufficiently gratified. They were invited to the Grove, and entreated to be very good neighbours, without any ceremony.

The intimacy was ſoon began, and continued for two ſummers; but as the novelty of their characters wore off, and the vulgarity of the mother, and pert conceit of the daughter, were grown familiar, they now ceaſed even to excite laughter; their viſits, therefore, on the third year of meeting, grew leſs frequent, and was ſuddenly interrupted by the death of Mr. Weſtcote, who left his daughter heireſs to a hundred and thirty thouſand pounds, with the reverſion of near four thouſand a year ſettled on his wife for her life. All this immenſe property was got in the

the Alley: alas! how many were the families ruined, perhaps, to enrich one fortunate man!

The following ſummer, after the death of Mr. Weſtcote, was the firſt of Mr. Biddulph's reſidence at Myrtle-Vale, and both Mrs. Weſtcote and Lady Burley heard with ſatisfaction, that they ſhould have an additional neighbour; but as theſe very faſhionable perſonages went to Tunbridge and Southampton, previous to their viſiting the country, Mr. Biddulph and his amiable wife lived unmoleſted in retirement for many weeks; the Burley Family arriving at their ſeat only three days previous to the dreadful calamity that happened at the Vale, and the Weſtcote's on that ſame evening.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

WE ſhall now return to the worthy, but unfortunate pair, who were ſurpriſed by receiving a note from Lord and Lady Burley, requeſting permiſſion to wait on them, with the hope of obtaining the pleaſure of their company, to return with them to the Grove, where they muſt be much better accommodated than at the farmer's, and confer a particular obligation on them, by accepting the invitation.

This

This polite and friendly billet, gave equal ſurpriſe and pleaſure to Mr. Biddulph; for being unreſolved in what manner to diſpoſe of himſelf; and his poor Eliza ſtill too deeply affected with recent ſorrows, to think much on future plans, he thought, by accepting the offered civilities of the Burley's for a ſhort time, he ſhould be enabled to determine better on what he could, or ought to do, now that his fortune was ſo conſiderably diminiſhed; and that his wife would have a much greater chance to recover her health and ſpirits, from the attentive politeneſs they had reaſon to expect, than it was poſſible ſhe could do at the farm, where no one was capable of affording her any conſolation.

Theſe conſiderations paſſed quickly through his mind, whilſt Mrs. Biddulph peruſed the note; and when ſhe returned it to him with a deep ſigh, ſaying,

"I am unfit to receive any company, particularly ſtrangers of their rank,"

He

He then tenderly urged every motive he could ſuggeſt, to perſuade her into a compliance with the invitation, or at leaſt to permit their kindly intended viſit, and judge how far ſhe might hope to find the attention ſhe certainly at that time required from the hands of friendſhip.

"Friendſhip!" repeated ſhe; "ah! my dear Biddulph, friendſhip ſeldom follows fallen fortunes; nor can there be union or confidence, but in equality of ſituations; however, I have no will but your's, and ſeeing which way *your* wiſhes tend, I will endeavour to receive their viſit as well as I can; I can promiſe nothing further, at leaſt until I have ſeen them."

Delighted with her compliance, Mr. Biddulph returned a very polite anſwer, which ſoon brought Lord and Lady Burley to the farm.

The

The dreadful fire at Myrtle-Vale, was ſeen at the Grove, and had inſpired equal terror and compaſſion in its inhabitants and the neighbourhood; which was greatly increaſed on the information, that the poor infant had periſhed in the flames. The dangerous illneſs of its unhappy mother, for ſome time rendered her recovery doubtful, and as Mr. Biddulph ſhut himſelf up with her, nothing more than common inquiries for their health could be offered; but when Lady Burley heard ſhe was in a convaleſcent ſtate, ſhe propoſed to her Lord giving them an invitation for a few weeks to the Grove. And here let me do this faſhionable couple juſtice; there are no characters in life, but what have their lights and ſhades; perfection is not in human nature; the beſt, the worthieſt people have their particularities, their foibles; the moſt vicious and profligate ſome traits of humanity, charity and feeling, not entirely to be eradicated; though they may lay dormant and ſhadowed over by folly and vice. Neither Lord nor Lady Burley was deficient in compaſſion

compaſſion on any ſtriking occaſion; and it is moſt certain, that real humanity towards the unhappy ſufferers, was at firſt their principal inducement to offer them their houſe and accommodations, for they had never ſeen their perſons, nor heard more than the general knowledge of their characters; nor was it probable they could promiſe themſelves much amuſement from perſons under their afflictive circumſtances; therefore, we will give all due credit to their motives for ſo friendly an invitation.

On their arrival at the farm-houſe, being met by Mr. Biddulph, and conducted by him to his wife, admiration and inclination gave additional ſpurs to compaſſion and humanity. Lady Burley thought Biddulph the fineſt fellow ſhe had ever beheld; his Lordſhip, though he did not think Eliza the moſt *beautiful*, felt that ſhe was the moſt *intereſting* object he had ever met with.

The

The Biddulph's were equally charmed with the polite tenderneſs of their behaviour to them, and to each other; and when, with irreſiſtible earneſtneſs, and in words the moſt affectionate, her Ladyſhip repeated her invitation, Eliza found, that however repugnant to her inclinations, it was impoſſible, without appearing rude and faſtidious, to reſiſt a requeſt ſo warmly urged, and ſo kindly intended. Reluctantly therefore, in her heart, though politely acknowledging in her expreſſions, ſhe acquieſced in what ſhe could not refuſe, being convinced that ſhe complied with her huſband's wiſhes in ſo doing.

As Lady Burley made a point of taking her with them, few preparations were neceſſary on their part; as their trunks could be ſent after them, and their preſent wardrobe was but ſmall, they made no difficulty in obliging her; and after Mrs. Biddulph had tenderly embraced and thanked the farmer's wife, ſhedding ſome tears, which ſhe ſtrove to repreſs, and receiving from the good woman

man a thouſand wiſhes for her health and happineſs, with a heavy heart ſhe entered the carriage, and accompanied by her beloved huſband, attended her new friends to the Grove.

Every attention that the moſt friendly ſolicitude could deviſe for their accommodation, Mr. and Mrs. Biddulph experienced; the former ſeemed to be recovering his ſerenity, after a few days reſidence, and ſtrove to convince his wife, that it was their duty to ſubmit with patience, to the decrees of the Almighty, and a compliment their friends had a right to expect, that ſhe ſhould appear to be happy.

"I know, my dear Eliza," added he, "that you muſt *feel*; misfortunes like our's are not eaſily forgotten, but grief indulged too far; tears continually flowing: and a never-ceaſing regret, implies an impeachment of the juſtice and diſpenſations of Providence, unworthy of a Chriſtian."

"Ah! my dear Biddulph," anſwered ſhe, "do not reproach nor accuſe me; my grief, though great, is not clamerous; I ſhall often weep, perhaps, but they are ſilent tears, which I cannot always ſuppreſs, and which diſturb no one. Tis not that I accuſe heaven for depriving me of my poor infant; no; I kiſs the rod of affliction, and meekly bow under it; tis not his death, but the dreadful circumſtances of it, that every moment riſes to my view, and freezes my very ſoul with horror—tears will guſh from my eyes—ſighs will iſſue from my boſom, though I ſtruggle to impede their paſſage, and appear reſigned to my misfortunes, and grateful to our friends. I will labour, be aſſured I will, to ſubdue my feelings; happy if I can accompliſh the taſk; as to pecuniary loſſes, they hold but little ſhare in my regrets; believe me my love! with you for my loved companion, two hundred a year will gratify all *my* deſires; and ſhould I ever be tempted to wiſh for more, it muſt be for your ſake alone."

Penetrated

Penetrated with this mild affectionate reply, Mr. Biddulph warmly embraced his amiable wife, and declared, that bleſt with her ſociety, he was happier than millions could make him without her, and that affluence would have no ſhare in his wiſhes, but for her gratification.

Thus, like the firſt innocent and happy pair in Paradiſe, this equally affectionate, and comparatively good couple, partook of each other's felicity, ſecure in the preſent integrity of their hearts, nor ever dreamt of the cruel ſubtle ſerpent, that was laying in wait to deſtroy their peace for ever!"

Lord and Lady Burley were too much intereſted for the reſtoration of happineſs to their gueſts, not to employ every engine of pleaſure and gratification to their ſeveral inclinations, which ingenuity, affection, or intereſt could ſuggeſt. His Lordſhip following the impulſe (which was never ſubdued either by age or debility) to gallantry, from the firſt

view of Mrs. Biddulph, was charmed by her light elegant figure, and captivated by the intereſting and ſoft melancholy that pervaded her features; in conſequence of his firſt predilection in her favour, he devoted himſelf, from the day ſhe became his gueſt, with the moſt perſevering aſſiduity, to gain her favour, or in other words, to ſeduce her affections from her huſband, whilſt the intended victim of his baſeneſs, little ſuſpicious of his deſigns, received his attentions with grateful reſpect, and gave him credit for virtues, very foreign to his heart.

Lady Burley had been alike charmed with Mr. Biddulph's perſon and manners, and having no declared admirer in the country with her, the ſpruce Chaplain's devoirs being grown "ſtale and unprofitable," ſhe was entirely diſengaged, and at liberty to admit of a new choice; that choice fell on Biddulph, in conſequence of which, every charm was called forth, every exertion of wit, beauty, ſoftneſs, and marked attention; every en-

deavour to catch the favourable moment, of being accidentally, as it might ſeem, alone with him, when the moſt ſeducing tenderneſs was employed to expreſs her friendſhip and great concern for his misfortunes; the tone of her voice, the downcaſt yet tender and confuſed looks, beaming with ſoft contagion, affected the unwary Biddulph moſt deeply; he thought her the angel of conſolation, and the goddeſs of peace; he looked up to her with a reſpect next to adoration, and bleſt the happy hour that had conducted her ſteps to the farm-houſe. Alas! poor Biddulph, theſe viſionary delights, theſe roſes of content that ſpread their fragrance around thee, concealed the moſt piercing thorns that were ready to wound thee with a ſeverity never to be cured, never to be forgotten!

CHAP. XIV.

ABOUT a week after Mr. and Mrs. Biddulph became reſidents at the Grove, Mrs. Weſtcote and her rich daughter, came to pay their reſpects to the family; they had juſt thrown off their mourning, and came forth armed at all points, loaded with jewels, laces, and every faſhionable appendage to dreſs; Lord and Lady Burley introduced them to their gueſts; the plainneſs of whoſe dreſs, and the dimunition of their fortune, which began to be whiſpered through the female roundabouts of the families, in-

inſpired

inſpired no reſpect for them, nor even the common forms of decorum, which humanity might have dictated to any other beings, than the proud and illiterate Mrs. Weſtcote, and her pert, ſelf-conceited daughter, whoſe arrogance had riſen in proportion to the knowledge of her immenſe fortune. After the ceremonies of introduction were over, Miſs Auguſta Matilda, (for ſhe always preferred *that appellation* to Miſs Weſtcote) threw her eyes over the unaſſuming Mrs. Biddulph, with an air of contemptuous pity, and then playing with her fan, apologized to Lady Burley for the long delay of their viſit;

"Solely," ſhe ſaid, "occaſioned by her mother's whims."

"Why, indeed, my Lady," cried Mrs. Weſtcote, "I am aſhamed of my ill-breeding, that I am, but Miſs Auguſta knows I have been long in a ſad *ſatyrical* way, that I have."

" I am extremely ſorry to hear it, Madam," replied her Ladyſhip, endeavouring to ſuppreſs a ſmile.

" Lord! Mamma," exclaimed Miſs, " you mean *hiſterical*; why ſatyrical means being very croſs; to be ſure you have enough of that; however, you did'nt mean to tell the company ſo I believe," forcing a violent laugh.

" No, to be ſure, I meant no ſuch a thing Miſs, ſo you need'nt laugh ſo, if I did miſtake; but indeed, my Lady, I have very low ſpirits, quite nervous, and my doctor orders me to take good cordials; but I hates your *ſpiritual* liquors, and never drinks nothing but wine and punch."

" And cherry brandy," cried Miſs.

" Well, ſuppoſes I does, 'tis my own making, and as ſoft as milk."

" And

"And a very excellent cordial," ſaid Lady Burley.

"So it is, my Lady, and the only one I ever drinks."

Then turning to Mrs. Biddulph, "I was very ſorry to hear of your accident madam; you loſt every thing, I hear; dear me how terrible; and not inſured neither, and the only houſe you have too; Lord bleſs me! you muſt be ſadly off."

Mrs. Biddulph, whoſe ſpirit was rouſed by this impertinance, replied, "Not ſo badly as you imagine, Madam; our loſs was very great, certainly, but we can bear it, without *feeling* the injury, except in one tender point."

"Indeed," cries the other, with a ſtare, taking her words in a literal ſenſe, "Well, I am very glad to hear it, for I was told you was almoſt ruined."

" I thank heaven then Madam," ſaid Mr. Biddulph, with an aſſumed vivacity, " that you were miſ-informed; we have yet enough for content and happineſs."

Lord Burley, who ſaw a penſiveneſs ſteal over the features of Mrs Biddulph, at this unſeaſonable and impertinent chat, gave a turn to the converſation, by aſking the ladies if they had been amuſed at Southampton.

" No, indeed," anſwered Mrs. Weſtcote, " I don't like them there people at all; they are ſo rude, and ſo proud, they don't pay no reſpect to people of fortune; and then there too, Miſs Auguſta would go to the muſic meeting at t'other place, and there to be ſure they were ten times worſe; for would you think it my Lady, one night when I was a ſitting at the top of the room, ſome Lady, I don't know who, comes and ſhoves me down, and looking as if ſhe could eat me up with ſpite, ſaid,"

" A little

"A little lower, if you pleaſe, this is not your place;"

"So I was going to anſwer, when up comes one of the ſtewarts, or what they call them, ſo ſays he ——"

"Lord! mamma, what ſtuff is all this; who cares what he ſaid; I am ſure I was very well pleaſed; I had the moſt enchanting partner, my Lady; he danced with me at Southampton, and then followed me there, and I don't know but he may come into the country, for I aſked him."

"You did," exclaimed the old Lady; "why who knows him; he may be a highwayman for ought you can tell; for them there ſorts of people I have heard often goes to them places to ſee what they can pick up."

"Very like," ſaid Miſs, with a diſdainful toſs of her head," but no ſuch ſhall pick up me; my beau is a gentleman, and I ſhall in-

vite who I pleaſe to ſee me, I'll aſſure you, madam."

Lady Burley, who had been too much accuſtomed to their polite altercations, to derive any amuſement from it, ſought to change the ſubject, by aſking Mrs. Weſtcote, "if ſhe had heard of the elopement of Miſs Stevens, the Attorney's daughter, in the adjoining village."

"O dear, yes my Lady, I heard that the firſt thing, the very night I comed down; I was told Miſs Stevens was runned away on a matrimonical expoſition; and this gentleman's ſeat burnt to the ground, 'tis quite a *vale* now indeed!"

Mrs. Biddulph, unable to bear this ſudden and cruel alluſion to the name of their manſion, and the painful ideas it recalled, burſt into a flood of tears, and haſtily left the room; Mr. Biddulph followed, darting an angry and diſdainful look at the unfeeling woman.

Lord

Lord and Lady Burley both reproved her with ſome ſeverity, and appeared very deſirous that the viſit ſhould terminate; but unconſcious of giving any particular offence;—

"Poor ſoul!" ſaid ſhe, "I don't wonder ſhe cries, for they do ſay, ſure enough, that they be ruined, and 'tis very charitable of you, my Lady, to take them in."

"I believe," returned Lord Burley, "they have ſtill a very good property; people know nothing of their affairs, and we are much obliged to Mr. and Mrs. Biddulph for giving us their company."

"Well," cried Miſs, "I hope they *are not* ruined, for the gentleman is very ſmart and handſome; ſhe is a poor dowdy, I think."

"A poor dowdy!" repeated his Lordſhip, "ſurely Miſs Weſtcote you are in the

obſcure to night; Mrs. Biddulph is a very elegant and lovely young woman."

"Lovely!" exclaimed Miſs.

"Elegant," repeated Lady Burley.

"Nay, nay, my Lord, ſpeak juſtly; ſhe is I believe a very good ſort of a woman, but as to being lovely or elegant, your Lordſhip will make no converts to that opinion."

"Not among the Ladies, I grant you," replied he, ſmiling, "but I have very little doubt but the votes of the gentlemen will be on my ſide."

"Indeed I can't believe it," ſaid Miſs Auguſta, "for I have heard a hundred beaus ſay they like gay lively women, whereas, I declare ſhe is for all the world like a weeping ſtatue, and her complexion like white varniſh, ſuch as you paint rooms with."

"You

"You are ſo clever, and ſo funny, Miſs," ſaid the mother, "one can't help laughing; but you know ſhe has had enough to make her look diſmal, and to be ſure, I thinks ſhe's a pretty ſort of body enough, when her malancholic goes off."

The tea equipage interrupted the converſation, and Mrs. Biddulph having collected more fortitude from the contempt ſhe felt for the fooliſh mother and vain daughter, re-entered the room, to the great joy of Lord Burley, who paid her a thouſand reſpectful attentions, that gave great umbrage, not only to his viſitors, but even to her Ladyſhip, who though accuſtomed to ſee his gallantries, and heartily deſpiſing the man, could not bear thoſe preferences to Mrs. Biddulph, which might exalt her in the opinion of her huſband. All therefore were diſpleaſed, though they endeavoured to diſguiſe it, and Miſs Auguſta looking upon her as a perſon in no degree of comparative merit with herſelf, and as much inferior in beauty as in fortune, beheld his Lordſhip's

Lordſhip's aſſiduities with malignancy and ſpite, as an inſult to her conſequence; determined within herſelf to mortify this prefered object, by an oſtentatious diſplay of her own ſuperiority in riches and grandeur; ſhe ſeized an opportunity to whiſper her mother, and preſently after Mrs. Weſtcote requeſted "all the good company would dine at the Hall on the third day from the preſent one."

Lady Burley politely, though coldly, referred the invitation to Mrs. Biddulph,

"If agreeable to that Lady, *ſhe* could have no objection."

"Your Ladyſhip is very obliging," replied ſhe, "it would give me great pain, if your polite conſideration for me, prevented your acceptance of Mrs. Weſtcote's invitation; I muſt earneſtly requeſt therefore, ſhe may not be deprived of the honour of your company on my account; and I hope, Madam," turning to Mrs. Weſtcote, "you will

will accept my thanks for your politeneſs, and not be diſpleaſed that my very indifferent ſtate of health will not permit me to attend on my friends to the Hall."

"Lord," exclaimed ſhe, "why you are ſo *ſuperſtitious* in your manner; I don't ſee but your health is well enough, and if you come out, it will be better, and not ſtay moping and thinking about your troubles, which nobody can't help at all; therefore pray ma'am, do you and your huſband come, I dare's to ſay 'twill do you good."

"O pray Mrs. Biddulph do come," cried Miſs, "I long to have you ſee the Hall; you will like it vaſtly, I am ſure."

"I would not wiſh," ſaid Lord Burley, "to have Mrs. Biddulph preſſed to any thing not agreeable to her inclinations; you will therefore have the goodneſs to excuſe us ladies."

"Dear

" Dear me," ſaid Mrs. Weſtcote, with a ſpiteful air and tone of voice, " I have no notion at all of people's making ſuch a fuſs; why hav'nt I loſt my huſband! and did I be croſs to every body, and ſtay at home becauſe I was *ſatyrical.*"

Hiſterical you mean, madam" cried Miſs.

" Well, no matter, 'tis all one; but I hates to ſee people grieving and looking diſmal, when it won't at all make things better, and prevent other folks from making merry."

" Far be it from my wiſh, Madam," anſwered Mrs. Biddulph, with a half ſmothered ſigh, " to intrude my ſorrows on others, or ſadden the enjoyments of my friends; if 'tis agreeable to Lord and Lady Burley to accept your invitation, I will not tax their politeneſs to wave it on my account, much rather (if you will excuſe a ſpiritleſs companion) much rather will I honour myſelf by accompanying them."

" That's

"That's a dear creature!" exclaimed Miſs Auguſta, "now I love you exceſſively; well then we ſhall expect to ſee you all."

Mrs. Biddulph bowed with the reſt of the company, but not at all the more reconciled to the viſit, for the familiarity of the young lady.

When the Weſtcote's had taken leave, Lady Burley indulged herſelf in a hearty laugh at their expence, and even my Lord joined in the ridicule.

Mr. and Mrs. Biddulph having no reliſh for polite ſcandal, nor being deſirous of hearing characters cut up, though they felt a contempt for both mother and daughter, yet by no means encouraged the detail of their family hiſtory, which Lady Burley entered upon, and highly caricatured. As ſoon therefore as decorum permitted, they retired to their apartment; Mr. Biddulph appeared more than uſually grave, and even melancholy.

His

His amiable wife, who knew he had received letters from town relative to their affairs, ſuppoſed he had ſome unpleaſant intelligence to impart, that he apprehended might give her pain; after looking at him a moment in ſilence, ſhe took his hand affectionately between her's,

"My dear Biddulph," ſaid ſhe, "after what I have ſuffered, and what I yet feel, is there any thing that can add to my wretchedneſs? no, whilſt you are in health, no loſſes, no misfortunes of a pecuniary kind, can for one moment give me additional pain; whatever you have to communicate, ſpeak freely, 'tis only through you that I can be wounded, for myſelf I have no fears."

"I ought indeed," replied he, "to give you credit both for your love and generoſity; nor will I diſguiſe the truth, dear Eliza; our little fortune is ſtill leſs than I expected; my Bailiff ſends me word, our houſe and furniture in town ſold very badly; I wiſh now I had gone myſelf,

myſelf, *moſt ſincerely* I wiſh it, things might have been better; the tradeſmen who fitted up the concert rooms, and made other alterations, have brought in extravagant bills; I am half mad; we ſhall not have a hundred and fifty pounds a year left, for I am determined not to touch a ſingle guinea of the money in the ſtocks, ſecured to you."

"And why not, if you want it?" anſwered ſhe; "but my dear huſband, let us conſider how many families live upon leſs than a hundred and fifty pounds a year; let us proportion our wants to our income, or elſe take out that money from the funds, and purchaſe a place for yourſelf—at any rate let us leave this houſe; why intrude upon the hoſpitality of its owners; why accuſtom ourſelves to a ſtyle of life we never can ſupport, and perhaps, by indulgence, may be tempted to regret the want of?"

He

He looked earneſtly at her for a moment; "Eliza," cried he, "you are an angel, or you are;" he ſtopt——

"A mere mortal woman," ſaid ſhe, "but an affectionate wife, whoſe whole ſtudy ſhall be to make you happy and contented."

"Good God!" exclaimed he, "'tis impoſſible!"

"What is impoſſible, my dear Biddulph? not my endeavours to make you happy, I hope—you ſee I have ſtruggled to obey you; I have taught my heart to ſubdue its feelings, nothing therefore can be impoſſible for me to attempt; no difficulties ſo great, but I may conquer them."

"This is too much, too much," ſaid he, throwing his arms around her; "I muſt, I do believe you."

Without

Without any further explanation, he ſtrove to change the ſubject, and appeared to be ſatisfied with the fortitude ſhe expreſſed.

"As to leaving the Grove," he ſaid, "they could not quit it ſuddenly; it would appear both uncivil and ungrateful, but he would make an inquiry for a ſituation retired and remote from the rich and faſhionable, whoſe acquaintance they could no longer ſupport, and within a ſhort time, he hoped all things would be properly ſettled."

Although Mrs. Biddulph appeared to be ſatisfied with this reply, there was a ſomething in his looks, in his manner, and an ambiguity in ſome of his expreſſions, that gave her pain and apprehenſion, though ſhe could not divine the cauſe, and ſhe vainly tried to compoſe herſelf to reſt, for her ſpirits were oppreſſed with doubt, and fear of evils yet unknown to her.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

THE characters and deſigns of Lord and Lady Burley, have been already ſufficiently explained; and though all due credit has been given to the firſt impulſes of humanity, when they invited Mr. and Mrs. Biddulph to their houſe, yet we may, without any great breach of charity ſuppoſe, *that* virtue would have been of ſhort duration, had not more powerful incentives prevailed on them to continue the ſemblance of tender compaſſion and friendſhip—for 'tis not at all probable, perſons under the preſſure of miſ-

fortunes,

fortunes, with minds deeply afflicted, and little capable of entertaining others, or of being amuſed themſelves, could for any time have proved agreeable inmates to perſons of a gay diſſipated turn; but the truth is, Lord Burley found Mrs. Biddulph quite to his taſte, charming and intereſting, and he fully determined to profit by the opportunity, fortune (his favourite deity) had thrown in his way, and ſeduce this deſirable woman from duty and virtue.

Her Ladyſhip felt the ſame predilection for the huſband, and being well ſkilled in every female ſeducive artifice, ſhe ſtudied his temper, and endeavoured to penetrate into the foldings of his heart, to know where his vulnerable part lay, that ſhe might plan her ſchemes with a hope of ſucceſs. Alas! how few can bear the ſcrutiny! where is the man, or woman that can boaſt perfection, and ſtand proof againſt the charge of ſome particular weakneſs, ſome dormant foible, that may be diſcovered

diſcovered by the eye of curioſity, affection, or malice.

Although Mr. Biddulph had ſuffered for his good-nature and credulity, his heart was not callous, his confidence in ſeeming friendſhip and integrity, neither ſhut up, nor even narrowed by the cold hand of prudence, which had lately graſped him hard to teach him her neceſſary leſſons.

Lady Burley was an adept in the ſchool of diſſimulation and ſeeming virtue, and very early after their acquaintance, put forth all her arts to engage his eſteem, and "cheat him from himſelf." She lay in wait for every favourable opportunity to diſplay her tenderneſs and compaſſion; thoſe charms which ſhe ſtill poſſeſſed, received every addition that ingenuity, dreſs or art could contrive.

Poor Biddulph, miſled by her profeſſions of friendſhip, and flattered by the tenderneſs of

of her words and actions, fancied, in the hour of danger, that he only paid the tribute of gratitude, and did juſtice to the beauties of her perſon. His treacherous heart never once miſgave him, nor led him to ſtart at the injuſtice he was doing to his amiable wife; thus his very virtues betrayed him.

The day previous to the Weſtcote's viſit, had proved uncommonly ſultry; after tea Mrs. Biddulph withdrew to her apartment, that ſhe might anſwer a letter ſhe had received from her worthy friend, Mr. Barrow, who had given them a preſſing invitation to his houſe, but which her huſband ſeemed no ways inclined to accept. Lord Burley retired to his library; and her Ladyſhip invited Biddulph to ſtrole with her to the grove at the end of the garden—an invitation he eagerly accepted.

This grove, from which the houſe took its name, was very beautiful and extenſive; about half a mile from the houſe, was an ele-

gant pavilion, built in the thickeſt part of the grove; a murmuring ſtream gently glided through the trees on one ſide of it, on the other ſide was an aviary, where a variety of melodious birds ſung in a manner inexpreſſibly charming; the trees round the pavilion were encircled with woodbines and roſes, that yielded the moſt delightful perfume, whilſt tubs filled with lemon and orange trees, interſperſed between the openings, added to the fragrance and beauty of the ſcene.

To this enchanting ſpot, Lady Burley conducted the admiring Mr. Biddulph; here, where nature and art had contrived to captivate the eye, and convey the moſt delicious ſoftneſs to the ſoul, did that artful licentious woman call in the auxiliaries of beauty and tenderneſs, to ſubdue her intended victim. Unconſcious of the premeditation; charmed with the ſcene around him, and penetrated with gratitude for the friendſhip and uncommon intereſt this charming woman ſeemed to feel for him, he viewed her with eyes of admiration

miration and ſoft acknowledgment; their converſation grew intereſting; ſhe affected, under the appearance of ſorrow and confuſion, to make him her confidant.

" She was not happy; ſhe had been ſacrificed by her parents, to gratify their ambition; my Lord neglected her, and was fond of every other woman: ſhe had for years ſtudied to deſerve his love, and appear to the world what ſhe was not, happy. The ſtruggle now grew too much for her ſpirits; within theſe few days, ſhe had been convinced there were congenial ſouls; had fate allotted her ſuch a huſband as Mr. Biddulph, how ſupreme would have been her felicity! could ſhe in ſuch circumſtances have been gratified by the attentions of ſuch a man as Lord Burley? ſurely Mrs. Biddulph could have no eyes, or but little ſenſibility; happy would it be for ſome others, if they poſſeſſed that indifference; for *her* part, ſhe owned, *ſhe* had a heart capable of the greateſt tenderneſs, the moſt glowing affection, but unhappily her

ſentiments muſt be ſuppreſſed; ſhe was doomed to a joyleſs life, and to preſerve herſelf from pity and contempt, muſt deceive the world by an appearance of happineſs, *never to her* attainable."

A heavy ſigh, with a few forced tears, concluded this fine tale, which ſtole into the heart of the unſuſpicious hearer, and inſpired every tender ſenſation ſhe wiſhed to create.

Mr. Biddulph was a man of honour, of integrity; he loved his wife moſt affectionately; he reſpected the ſacred duties that bound them together, nor would he have indulged one thought, or have been guilty *deſignedly*, of a ſingle action that might militate againſt the love and reſpect he owed to his Eliza. But alas! here he was taken off his guard; tenderneſs, gratitude, compaſſion and admiration, all at once aſſailed him; he ſought to beſtow that compaſſionate ſympathy towards her, ſhe had laviſhed on him: vanity too; (for men with all their boaſted

and

and aſſumed ſuperiority of reaſon, are as vulnerable there as the weakeſt woman) vanity was flattered by the delicate praiſes that fell from lips ſo lovely; and in ſhort, not to dwell on a ſcene ſo humiliating to virtue, in ſeeking to comfort *her*, he loſt *himſelf*, and in one moment plunged himſelf into miſery and repentance.

Not content with her triumph, this truly infamous woman, from the natural hatred of vice to goodneſs, dropped ſeveral ambiguous hints, relative to his innocent wife and Lord Burley; aſſured him there was a very good underſtanding between them; and that my Lord was ſeldom kind or generous, but from intereſted views; that from her obſervations for ſome days paſt, ſhe had been aſtoniſhed to ſee that Mrs. Biddulph could pay ſo much attention to his Lordſhip, with ſuch a huſband by her ſide; but ſome people had very depraved hearts, under the moſt ſpecious appearances; unhappily for her, ſhe was a ſtranger to deceit, and her extreme

ſenſibility had betrayed her feelings, where ſhe had moſt wiſhed to conceal them; the conſequence had made her deſpicable in her own eyes, and muſt for ever injure her in the eſteem of a man, ſhe bluſhed to acknowledge, poſſeſſed her whole heart.

The deceived, infatuated Biddulph, poured forth a profuſion of grateful tender expreſſions, to reconcile this delicate, virtuous lady to herſelf; and after above two hours ſpent in the pavilion, they returned to the houſe, very differently affected; for paſſion being a little abated, ſomething like remorſe roſe in the mind of the gentleman, and when he entered the drawing-room, and met the eyes of his Eliza, he gave an involuntary ſtart, and in a confuſion he could not diſguiſe, threw himſelf into a chair; ſhe haſtily came to him, and aſked the cauſe of his emotion, for which he aſſigned ſome trifling reaſon, that ſatisfied her, and he recovered from his momentary compunction.

Lord

Lord Burley was in the room, and no ſooner had Biddulph obſerved him, than the baſe ſuggeſtions his Lady had thrown out, ſtruck him moſt forcibly; Lord Burley and his wife had been together, he knew not how long, but he had no doubt now of the reality of a correſpondence between them; every look, every word confirmed it. Whilſt he was making his obſervations, and adducing freſh proofs every moment, from the complaiſance of the grateful Eliza to his Lordſhip, Lady Burley entered the room; his eyes were then rivetted on her; ſhe affected a ſlight indiſpoſition, to colour the languor and ſoftneſs of her words and looks, and to draw the attention of Biddulph, who believed her remorſe and vexation occaſioned it, and almoſt execrated himſelf as the cauſe of pain to ſuch an amiable woman.

As in the courſe of the evening, ſeveral little occurrences gave Lord Burley an opportunity of evincing his particular complaiſance to Mrs. Biddulph; at thoſe times his

Lady would give Mr. Biddulph ſuch ſignificant looks, that he, who perfectly comprehended to what they alluded, was fired with rage and vexation which he endeavoured to ſuppreſs, becauſe a certain monitor whiſpered *retalliation*; yet ſo unjuſt are men, that though conſcious of his own error, and ſenſible that he had injured his wife, he felt the higheſt degree of reſentment againſt Lord Burley, and equal anger, contempt and vexation againſt her. His mind that night was in tumults, from the variety of emotions he endured, and the different plans that floated on his imagination, as proper to be purſued. At length he determined to keep his ſuſpicions to himſelf, until they received further confirmation, and then act as the exigence might require.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

THE following day Lady Burley and Mr. Biddulph, had an opportunity to meet privately; and as it has been related, in the evening when their gueſts had left them, and he retired with his Eliza, though he had remarked Lord Burley's attentions to her with diſpleaſure, and from thence originated that appearance of concern which had alarmed her tenderneſs, yet her behaviour on that occaſion, and her deſire of leaving the Grove, altogether ſeemed ſo inconſiſtent with any attachment to Lord Burley, that his love

was revived, or at leaſt a temporary appearance of it, that for a ſhort time chaſed every doubt and ſuſpicion from his mind. But this was a ſituation not long to be permitted; the fondneſs, the artful endeavours of Lady Burley, were exerted to perſuade him of her unbounded affection for him, at the ſame time that ſhe deplored her own weakneſs in the moſt pathetic terms; envied the cold apathy of ſome women, who could behold a man with ſuch attractions, and were preſerved, by their frigidity, from ſacrificing, as ſhe had done, her heart, her honour and peace for ever! yet, ſtill *more* than ever, ſhe was aſtoniſhed that Mrs. Biddulph, poſſeſſed of ſuch a bleſſing, as *ſhe* would give the world to call *her's*, ſhould have ſo little judgment, ſo little delicacy, as to beſtow one thought on an object like Lord Burley, ſo every way inferior. Would to God, *ſhe* had poſſeſſed a ſoul ſo little capable of diſtinguiſhing merit, ſhe ſhould not then have to reproach herſelf for errors that were indeed involuntary and irreſiſtible.

This

This ſpecimen of her Ladyſhip's turpitude, will ſuffice to give an idea of the arts by which ſhe obtained a complete victory over the heart of the infatuated and deceived Biddulph, whoſe increaſing coldneſs towards his wife, paſſed with *her* for the uneaſineſs of his mind, and gave the moſt diabolical joy to her infamous rival.

On the day appointed to dine at the Hall, Lady Burley declared ſhe hated to be cooped up in a coach, ſhe would go in the phaeton; Mr. Biddulph of courſe offered to drive. His wife was rather diſconcerted; though unconſcious of Lord Burley's ſiniſter deſigns upon her, yet ſhe was ſenſible of a little impropriety in being left to go alone with him in the coach; but unable to make any other objections, than what might appear prudiſh and ridiculous, ſhe was ſilent. When ſhe entered the carriage, ſhe felt awkward and confuſed, though ſhe endeavoured to rally her ſpirits, and keep up a deſultory converſation; but the diſtance was very trifling, and his

Lordſhip was not diſpoſed to loſe this favourable opportunity; he therefore artfully evaded her queſtions about the country, &c. and began to expatiate on *her* charms; he was profuſe in his encomiums, and pretty plain in his declarations; though ſurpriſed and hurt, ſhe laughed it off at firſt, giving him credit for his gallantry, and trifling endeavours to amuſe her and himſelf; but when he kiſſed her hand, with more warmth than ſhe thought allowable, and talked of intereſting himſelf to procure ſome handſome appointment for her huſband, for which he would be ſolely indebted to her beauty and influence over him; ſhe thought it high time to appear ſerious, though not directly affrontive.

"My Lord," ſaid ſhe, with-drawing her hand, "both Mr. Biddulph and myſelf are much obliged to you for your *friendly intentions*; but having determined on a retired plan, and on living correſpondent to our moderate income, we can by no mean think of

of intruding upon your intereſt: for myſelf, ambition, or a deſire of riches, govern no part of my wiſhes; to live decently and privately with the huſband of my choice; the only man I ever did, or can love; to devote my future days towards making him happy, and to live free from ſelf-reproach, *this* is the extent of my deſires; to deſerve his love, the bounds of all my wiſhes."

Lord Burley, though a little confuſed at this mild and determined repulſe, was too keen a ſportſman, too much hackney'd in the arts of perſuaſion, and too much accuſtomed to the duplicity of women, to take this as a definitive anſwer; he therefore returned to the charge, and had the preſumption at laſt to propoſe ſettling a very handſome eſtate on *her* and *her* heirs, independent of her huſband, who ſhould likewiſe be provided for.

His inſolent propoſals were now too unequivocal to allow of a miſinterpretation; ſhe trembled with reſentment, and looking on him

him with equal diſdain and diſpleaſure, told him,

" His inhoſpitable treatment of her; his injurious deſigns againſt her huſband's peace and honour, would juſtify her, if ſhe expoſed him to the world; but that ill as *he* had behaved, ſhe too much reſpected his Lady's feelings, and Mr. Biddulph's happineſs, to mention what had paſſed; but ſhe warned him no more to inſult a virtuous woman, and, for the ſhort time ſhe might remain in his houſe, to reſpect the rights of hoſpitality."

Far from being abaſhed at this repulſe; far from reſpecting her virtue and misfortunes,

" My ſweet little coy Daphne," exclaimed he, with a taunting ſmile, " why you are quite in heroics; did it never enter your imagination, that this ſame huſband of your's, has amuſed himſelf with *my wife*, and that the Lady whoſe feelings you reſpect, has ſuperceded

ceded you in his affections? undeceive yourſelf, my dear Mrs. Biddulph, conſtancy in married pairs is a great bore, ſeldom pretended to, and ſtill leſs practiſed. I never interfere with *my* wife's pleaſures, nor ſhe with mine; Biddulph comprehends the whole buſineſs perfectly; if you think otherwiſe, make your own obſervations; judge for yourſelf, I will abide by the reſult; and in the mean time, ſtudy how I may beſt contribute to your real happineſs."

No words can do juſtice to Mrs. Biddulph's feelings during this ſpeech; overpowered by a variety of painful emotions, ſhe was incapable of uttering a ſingle word, and before ſhe could recover herſelf, the carriage drove up the avenue, and ſtopped.

His Lordſhip alighting, though not very nimbly, tendered his hand; but almoſt inſenſible, and ſcarcely looking at him, ſhe jumped from the carriage, and followed the ſervants.

The

The phaeton had ſet off before the coach, nor did they ſee any thing of it, conſequently Mrs. Biddulph expected to find Lady Burley and her huſband in the drawing-room, quietly ſeated with the Weſtcote's; but ſhe was extremely diſconcerted, when, on entering it, ſhe did not perceive them; and when, after ſaluting her, Miſs Auguſta inquired for the reſt of the party,

"I expected," anſwered Mrs. Biddulph, in a tremulous voice, "to have found them here."

Her eyes met Lord Burley's; he withdrew his with a ſignificant and malicious ſmile, that ſhe perfectly underſtood, and felt to her very heart.

Mrs. Weſtcote took notice ſhe looked ill, and preſt her to have a little of her own cordial, cherry brandy. Mrs. Biddulph declined it, but feeling herſelf getting very faint, ſhe ventured to aſk for hartſhorn and water,

water, which, when ſhe had drank, ſhe found herſelf better.

Near half an hour had elapſed, and no phaeton appeared.

"Upon my word," cried Miſs, "you have good faith, my Lord, to truſt your Lady with ſuch a faſcinating man."

"Lord! Miſs," ſaid the mother, "why you knows that as his Lordſhip an't very young nor very nimble, he can't mount them there carriages himſelf, and ſo there's no harm if he puts his gueſt to ſerve for him."

"You are miſtaken, Madam," replied his Lordſhip, not much pleaſed with the obſervation, "I frequently drive the phaeton; 'tis not a juſt concluſion, that becauſe a man is now and then viſited by the gout, that he muſt be old, and incapable of attending the ladies."

That

That moment the door opened, and Lady Burley, with her ſwain, was introduced.

"Bleſs me!" exclaimed ſhe, "here they are before us—well, good folks, did you think we had made an elopement?"

"Not I, faith!" ſaid his Lordſhip, "you are too much your own miſtreſs, to find that neceſſary; beſides, your chere ami had left a pledge behind him."

"True," ſaid Biddulph, in a gay tone, "and an exchange, though perhaps not of equal value, would have abſolved me, had I yielded to the temptation."

Thoſe words, a few days before, would ſcarcely have been heeded by Mrs. Biddulph; but now they were poiſon to her ears, and ſunk deep into her mind. Jealouſy, that bane to happineſs; doubt, fear and love; every contending paſſion was buſy at her heart, and being unuſed to diſguiſe her feelings,

ings, her anxiety was but too viſible in her expreſſive countenance.

Lady Burley, with an air of triumph, in a careleſs manner, aſked if ſhe was indiſpoſed?

"I am not very well, Madam," ſhe replied, "but I beg that I may not be an object of conſideration, to diſturb the harmony of the party."

Mrs. Weſtcote, who wanted to make a diſplay of her finery, propoſed ſhewing the houſe to Mrs. Biddulph; ſhe, glad of an opportunity to divert her attention, readily acceded, and followed her mechanically through the rooms; praiſed every thing pointed out to her, without diſcrimination; Mrs. Weſtcote ſitting down in her dreſſing-room, to give her a little reſpite, ſaid,

"Well, I am glad now you like my houſe and furniture; it coſt a power of money; a fortune for ſome folks; but I loves

to

to have every thing grand, and can afford it better, I believes, than many a Lord. Well, but now we talk of Lords, pray what do you think of our Lord here? he ſeems very fond of you, and as you have met with troubles and loſſes, he may be a good friend, for they do ſay he is very generous where he takes."

"Madam!" exclaimed Mrs. Biddulph, with a look of ſurpriſe.

"Why, what I ſay is very true; there was that there Miſs Stevens, who is runned away on an *expoſition* to Scotland, with a young man not nineteen; why ſhe was for a little time a favourite of my Lord's, and ſo he provided for the father, and ſettled ſomething upon the girl too, and all the people believes he helped to draw in the young Squire to this matrimonical buſineſs, and get her a rich huſband: ſo you ſee what I ſays is true; and he may be a good friend."

"Madam,"

"Madam," replied Mrs. Biddulph, with equal ſpirit and indignation, "I am not ſolicitous to obtain his Lordſhip's particular favour or friendſhip; I receive no obligations from any man; my fortune is adequate to my wiſhes. I am obliged to Lady Burley for her hoſpitality, but we ſhall ſoon leave the Grove, without deſiring or accepting any other favours, than what we are already indebted for; and even thoſe were preſt upon *me*, againſt my inclination, for I am but ill qualified to add any pleaſure to ſociety."

"Aye, you may not like it, but I ſee's your huſband does; and Miſs Matilda Auguſta ſaid to me but laſt night that ever was; Ma'am," ſaid ſhe, "that Lady Burley has got another gallant; the poor Chaplain may wear the willows, for Mr. Biddulph is the man now."

"Indeed, Madam," cried Mrs. Biddulph, riſing, "I know nothing of Lady Burley's affairs; we are indebted to her politeneſs, and

Mr.

Mr. Biddulph equally according with my inclinations and his own, pays her Ladyſhip proper reſpect and attention."

"Well, well," returned the other, hearing the dinner bell, "you knows your own affairs beſt, and both he and you do right to pleaſe them; ſo let's go down to dinner; I hope my cooks has ſent up ſomething you can eat, for I took notice t'other day that you have but a poor ſtomach."

They now deſcended to the dining parlour, where ſuch a load of meat, and every rarity the ſeaſon produced, or money could purchaſe, crouded the table, that the variety of effluvia was ſufficiently powerful to overcome a delicate appetite. The number of ſervants, the immenſe quantity of plate, and parade exhibited, equally pained and diſguſted Mrs. Biddulph. Ah! thought ſhe, a neat cottage, with a clean table cloth, and a plain joint, with my dear Biddulph by my ſide, how ſuperior, how much more deſirable than this

this profuſion and oſtentation! her mind was too much occupied with the occurrences of the day, to feel any inclination for eating, and it was with difficulty ſhe ſwallowed a few mouthfuls. Her eyes, however, were not idle; alas, their obſervation did not tend to her ſatisfaction; her huſband's were continually turned on Lady Burley; to *her* all his attention was addreſſed, and ſhe took a malicious pleaſure in encouraging his particular politeneſs, and in mortifying his unoffending wife: even Lord Burley enjoyed the ſcene; and but for the gaiety of the two former, and the loquacity of Mrs. Weſtcote, and her daughter, the converſation would have drooped, as Mrs. Biddulph was entirely abſorbed and ſpiritleſs the whole day.

After the tedious ceremonial of the dinner and deſert, which was equally profuſe and expenſive, they retired to the drawing-room, where they had not long been ſeated, before a card

a card was delivered to Miſs Weſtcote; ſhe abſolutely ſcreamed with joy.

"Heavens! my dear Sir William Prieſtwood! ſhow him up inſtantly."

"And who may he be?" aſked the mother.

"Lord! ma'am, why how ſtupid you are; 'tis my Southampton beau."

"Indeed; why I never heard he was a ſir any thing."

The door opened, and Sir William was announced; having walked up the room, bowed to Mrs. Weſtcote and Miſs, with a general one to the company—he turned again to Miſs Auguſta,

"Being in this part of the country, madam, on a fiſhing party. I could not deny myſelf

myſelf the ſuperlative pleaſure of paying my devoirs to you."

"I am vaſtly glad to ſee you, Sir William, and much obliged to you for doing me ſo much honour."

She then introduced the company and him to each other. The mother delighted with having another titled viſitor, ſaid,

"She thanked him for his kindneſs, and was ſorry he had not comed to dinner, for I aſſure you," added ſhe, "we had a very nice one, and plenty enough for a dozen more, if they had comed."

The gentleman regretted his own misfortune, in being deprived of ſo many hours of happineſs that he ſhould have enjoyed with ſuch a party.

This Sir William was a tall, handſome looking man enough, with a very good ad-

dreſs, and appeared to have ſeen a good deal of the world, and to have mixed with polite ſociety. Lord Burley knew there was an Iriſh Baronet of that name, and therefore was attentive and complaiſant to him. Lady Burley was never deficient in politeneſs to a ſtranger, and by his means the converſation grew lively and pleaſant to all parties but one, who had a corroding care at her heart, no gaiety could diſperſe; and not even the affectation of Miſs Auguſta, nor the abſurdities of her mother, could produce a ſmile from.

The evening turning out wet, the phaeton was ordered home; the partie quarré returned together in the coach, and ſoon after their arrival, ſeparated for the night.

The very great agitation of Mrs. Biddulph's ſpirits; the reſtraint ſhe had put on herſelf, with the too apparent indifference of her huſband, all preſt upon her, after ſhe was retired to night and ſolitude; and when Mr.

Biddulph awoke, he found her in a very high fever. Her ſituation alarmed him; his tenderneſs revived, and he appeared anxious to procure every neceſſary aſſiſtance for her.

"Tell me, my dear Eliza, where are your complaints; let me ſend for inſtant help."

"Do not diſtreſs yourſelf," ſaid ſhe, tenderly, "my diſorder will go off again; but I have a violent oppreſſion at my heart."

He got up, and requeſted the houſe-keeper to attend her, and ſaid he would ſend for a phyſician.

Lord and Lady Burley were informed of her illneſs; both were grieved, though for different reaſons; my Lord from the diſappointment of his views, her Ladyſhip leſt it ſhould revive the dormant affection of her huſband. Mrs. Biddulph grew ſtill worſe, and before the arrival of the phyſician, was in a high delirium. She raved inceſſantly

of her child, her huſband, Lord and Lady Burley, and diſcloſed every anxiety that dwelt upon her mind. Her huſband was both ſhocked and alarmed; two women were obliged to exert their ſtrength to keep her in bed.

"I am burning," cried ſhe, "myſelf and child will be deſtroyed in the flames: help! help! O! ſee my dear Henry is embracing Lady Burley: ſtand off, Lord Burley, I will not be inſulted; I will not believe my huſband is falſe; I do not want your intereſt; let me have him," ſhe kept on raving, "I will have my huſband; Lady Burley, you ſhall not keep him; let us die together: ſee, ſee my child is waiting for us."

In this manner ſhe ſcreamed for ſeveral hours, until nature was exhauſted, and ſhe lay ſpeechleſs, and almoſt without life. In that melancholy ſtate ſhe remained all night, the fever ſtill high, and without the power of taking

taking medicine. Bliſters and bleedings were applied; nothing relieved her, the violent palpitation of her heart too plainly evinced the ſeat of her diſorder.

Mr. Biddulph was in a ſituation truly pitiable; the deluſive and temporary veil that had been thrown over his ſenſes; the gratification of paſſion, and a tranſient admiration for an unworthy object, all vaniſhed at once. The delirium of his unhappy wife reſtored him to reaſon, to ſhame and remorſe; he was convinced he had been impoſed upon; it was evident his amour was known to his injured Eliza, and had thrown her into this ſtate. He knelt by the ſide of the bed; he tried every method to bring her to a recollection of him, but her eyes fixed on vacancy, and her inattention, too plainly proved her inſenſibility.

Lady Burley, who had once entered the room when ſhe was raving, very quickly withdrew.

"Biddulph," ſaid ſhe, "you had better retire with me."

"With you!" repeated he, "No, never, never; would to heaven I had never ſeen you; you have deſtroyed my wife."

With a look of inexpreſſible anger and diſdain, ſhe flounced out of the apartment.

That night, and great part of the following day, Mrs. Biddulph remained almoſt without motion, but a bliſter which had been put on her head, had the deſired effect of bringing returning reaſon; and the firſt object ſhe obſerved, was her huſband hanging over her; the firſt words ſhe feebly uttered, were,

"My heart, O my heart!"

Tranſported at hearing her ſpeak, Biddulph exclaimed,

"Live,

" Live, live my dear Eliza, for a huſband who adores you; live to forgive and bleſs a repentant huſband!"

She fixed her eyes ſteadily upon him.

" I do bleſs you, as I hope to be bleſſed."

Too weak to ſay more, ſhe continued to look at him with eyes expreſſive of love and pity—ſhe frequently repeated,

" My heart!" nor could every effort of the phyſicians ſubdue the palpitation, which violently affected her all the night. About ten the next day, the motion began to abate, but the medical gentlemen ſaw too plainly life was ebbing faſt alſo. As the palpitation abated, ſhe was enabled to ſpeak with more eaſe, though very feebly. She requeſted to be alone with her huſband; he was the image of deſpair and ſorrow, nor had he quitted the bedſide from the moment of her delirium.

" My

"My deareſt Biddulph," ſaid ſhe, "take comfort; your tenderneſs ſooths my laſt hours; blame not yourſelf; we are all liable to error."

"O my God! cried he, ſpare my wife; ſpare this moſt injured woman, that I may devote my future life to make her reparation!"

"Do not diſtreſs yourſelf," ſaid ſhe, "it cannot be; I go to my poor infant; it was that ſhocking event that will cauſe my death; indeed, my dear Biddulph, you have nothing to reproach yourſelf with."

Then pauſing a little, ſhe added,

"To *me* death is a meſſenger of peace, of reſt; ſpare me then the ſight of your ſorrows, that only can diſtreſs me now. This hour haſtening to me, *all* muſt experience; in *ſuch an hour*, virtue only can ſupport us; I truſt in the mercy of God; he will give you

you fortitude; to be *good*, is to be *happy*; remember *that* my deareſt huſband and we ſhall meet I hope to part no more. Adieu my beloved Biddulph, reſpect yourſelf, remember your duty to God; live to ſerve him, and remember alſo, that in this awful hour, if there exiſts any beings who have injured me, I as freely forgive *them* as *I* truſt to be forgiven."

Here ſhe ſtopped for ſome time, evidently ſhocked at ſeeing the extreme agonies of her huſband.

"I have murdered you," he cried, "that female fiend has deſtroyed us both!"

"No," replied ſhe, "no, do not think ſo; not you, the *fire*, *there* was the ſtroke. Accuſe no one, *pity* the guilty, they *muſt ſuffer* who deviate from virtue. I forgive and bleſs every one—do you the ſame. O, my heart!" ſhe again exclaimed, and panted for breath.

Biddulph

Biddulph rung for the attendants; the heart was indeed fluttering like an expiring bird, and without being capable of ſpeaking another word, with her eyes fixed on her huſband, his hand claſped within her's, ſhe for a few minutes ſtruggled for breath, when a heavy ſigh ſtopped the reſpiration for ever!!!

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

BRITISH MUSEUM 28 MY 72